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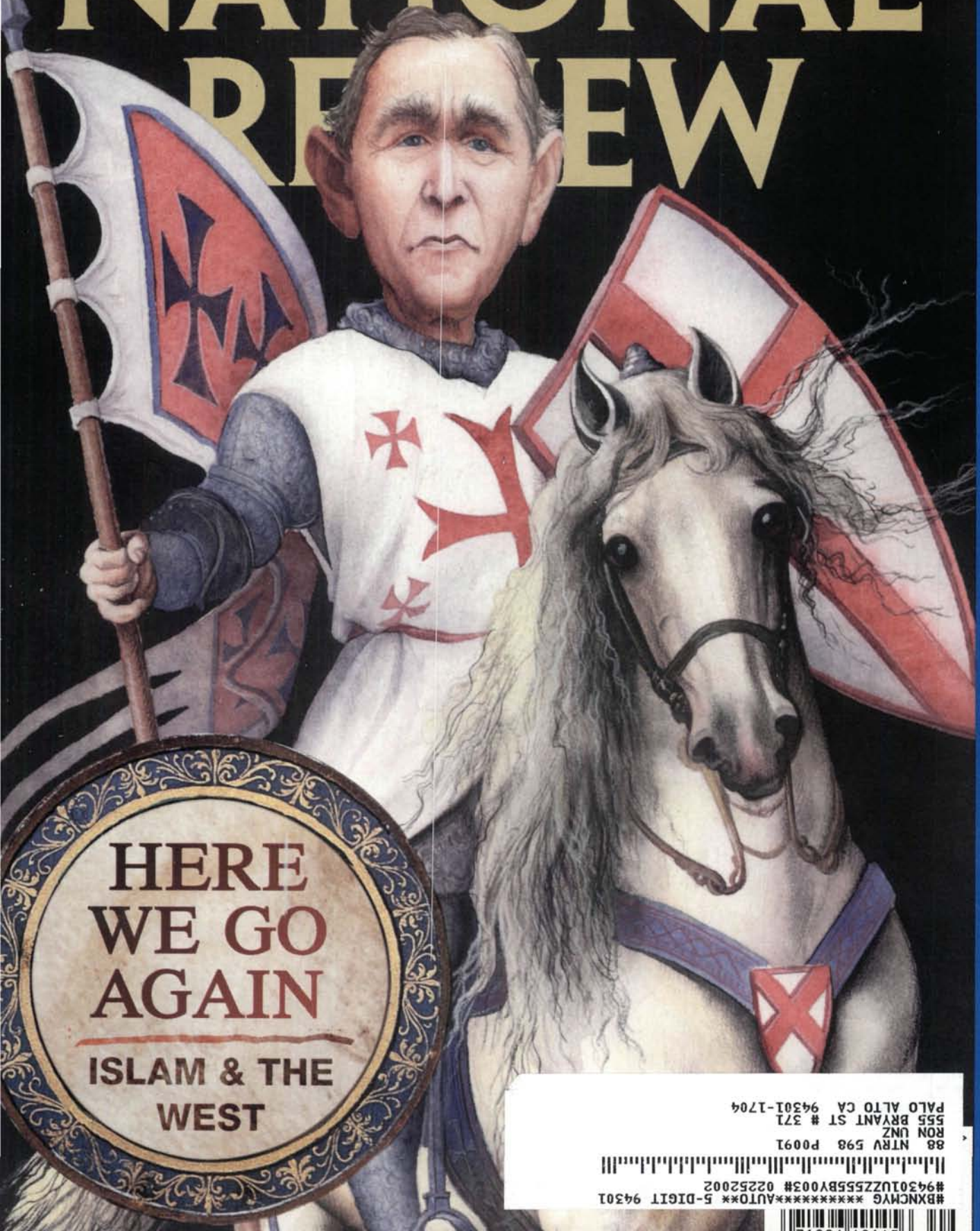

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■ LETTERS ■

NO PRIVACY LEFT?

In his Nov. 5 article "Your Papers, Please," John Derbyshire just does not appreciate what is a reality in this country: Anyone who has a credit card is already part of a national database, a database that the federal government can access. His argument about privacy is moot nonsense. And Alan Dershowitz should not be brought into the discussion. He flunked Constitutional Law 101 when he could not figure out why the Supreme Court took up the case of court shenanigans in Florida.

Hank Nizko
Melbourne, Fla.

ASSESSING HARRY

While glorifying Harry Truman has become popular these days, trying to find a "parallel" between Korea and the September 11 disasters shouldn't obscure history. Andrew J. Bacevich ("What It Takes," Oct. 15) seems aware of President Truman's pre-Korea lack of political will, but then backs off and ignores Truman's essential role in inviting the Korean War in the first place. Bacevich's Monday-morning "larger strategic context" cannot resurrect a less-than-creditable performance by Mr. "Buck Stops Here" Truman, and history should so record. We should be leery of Bacevich's apparent yen for globalization or American empire as the answer to the world's ills.

W. Edward Chynoweth
Sanger, Calif.

THE MONGOL HORDES

In his Oct. 15 piece, "The Western Edge," Arthur Herman (and possibly the book's author, Victor Davis Hanson) misses one dramatic counter-example to the claim of Western military dominance: the Mongol war machine. During the reign of Ogedei Khan, Mongol armies repeatedly routed every European military force they met. After his death, the tide from the Asian steppes receded from central Europe, but stayed in part of eastern Europe for centuries. Another power that repeatedly enjoyed success against the European military was the Ottoman Turks, but no power so badly manhandled the Western military as the Mongols.

Henry E. Heatherly
Lafayette, La.

KING AND COUNTRY

In his article "Kofi's Hour" (Nov. 5), Theodore Dalrymple makes the tongue-in-cheek statement: "The Norwegians haven't had a real leader since Quisling." The five years of Nazi Germany's occupation of Norway *did* produce real leaders: the leaders of the resistance movement. But the truest leader of the Norwegian people during WWII was their king, Haakon VII. He left Norway for England under dramatic circumstances, pursued by German military intent on killing him. In exile, the king played an important role as a rallying force, keeping morale and spirits high.

Arne Mjosund
Naples, Fla.

RUDY'S STAND

What Mayor Giuliani showed the Saudi prince (The Week, Nov. 5) had nothing to do with "spine." It was a lesson in demagogy, by both Giuliani and NR. Giuliani accused the prince of trying to justify the terrorism. He did nothing of the sort. His statement was a polite attempt to alert us that our unbalanced policy in the Middle East was making enemies and providing the fanatic fringe with an excuse for terrorism. I am now waiting for Giuliani to come up with $10 million of his own to replace the money he deflected from the New York victims.

K. A. Skala
Denver, Colo.

SENSIBILITY AND SENSE

I have been enjoying your coverage of our conflict with the terrorists, and agree with much of what you have printed in the pages of NR. However, your decision to print Mark Steyn's article ("Fight Now, Love Later," Oct. 15) was poor. The sexual overtones of the piece were inappropriate and detracted from his message.

Christian Mikkelson
Plattsburgh, N.Y.

Your recent issues covering the war on terrorism have been profound, and serve the national interest. And you have had the good sense to publish the always-engaging Mark Steyn.

Russell E. Cleary
Maynard, Mass.

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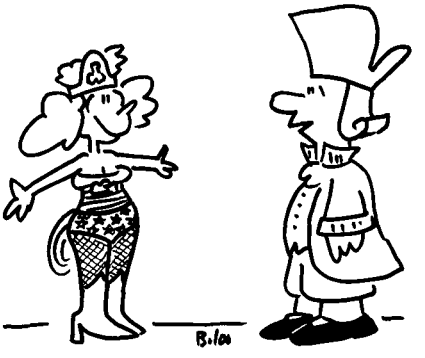
■ FOR THE RECORD ■

■ President **Bush**: "We will no doubt face new challenges, but we have our marching orders. My fellow Americans, let's roll." . . . "We are the target of enemies who boast they want to kill: kill all Americans, kill all Jews, and kill all Christians. We have seen that type of hate before, and the only possible response is to confront it and defeat it.". . . At U.N.: "Time is passing. Yet for the United States of America, there will be no forgetting September 11th." . . . **Dan Quayle**, on Fox News: "I know that Saddam Hussein is a terrorist. He tried to kill President **George Bush** in 1993 in Kuwait. He has used chemical weapons against his own people in the north. We know he has a terrorist nation and he rules with terror and he is exporting terrorism beyond his borders." . . . Sen. **Joe Lieberman** (D., Conn.), on CNN: "The president's war-on-terrorism policy is correct. When we get done with the Taliban and **bin Laden**, then **Saddam** has to be next.". . . Undersecretary of State **John Bolton**, in *New York Times*: "Had these people had ballistic missile technology, there's not the slightest doubt in my mind that they would have used it." . . . In ABC News/*Washington Post* poll, 71 percent support "sending a significant number of U.S. ground troops into Afghanistan." . . . 43 percent say U.S. "should be doing more" to prevent terrorism—up from 27 percent in October. . . . In *Bloomberg News* poll, Bush leads **Gore** in 2004 matchup, 59 percent to 30 percent. . . . Former CIA director **Jim Woolsey** on BBC: "Basically, the country was on a beach party for the 1990s."

■ Attorney General **John Ashcroft** announces "wartime reorganization" of Justice Department: "Defending our nation and defending the citizens of America against terrorist attacks is now our first and overriding priority." . . . "The half-life for a chief of staff is two years," says White House chief of staff **Andy Card**. "There are very few people who had the experience I am having that survived very long, and that is appropriate. There is no security. I will not vest in the pension system at the White House."

■ Following GOP gubernatorial losses in New Jersey and Virginia, speculation mounts that **Jim Gilmore**'s days as RNC chairman are numbered. . . . Of 36 governorships up for election next year, Republicans hold 23 of them. . . . **Charlie Cook**: "The numbers alone suggest that GOP dominance of the governorships may be in its final days." . . . House minority leader **Dick Gephardt**: "The now-traditional Republican campaign issues of tax cuts and cultural issues are no longer effective." . . . Republican consultant **Mike Murphy**, in *Washington Post*: "It's better to take a beating as a Republican for making the necessary but tough, but fair, spending cuts, than it is to try to become a Democrat and raise some taxes for a while." . . . As former Los Angeles mayor **Richard Riordan** (R.) declares for California governor, ex-state treasurer **Matt Fong** endorses conservative **Bill Simon**. . . . GOP liberal Rep. **Marge Roukema** (N.J.) says she will retire. Potential successor is conservative primary challenger **Scott Garrett**.



"Nice, Betsy, but let's stick with the flag idea for now."

■ **Bill Clinton** says he would outperform Bush on handling terrorism, according to *New York Post*: "I feel I would be better trained for it, more prepared." . . . Clinton chooses to resign from Supreme Court bar rather than fight suspension or disbarment resulting from **Paula Jones** case. . . . **Chelsea Clinton** on what went through her mind on September 11, in *Talk*: "I was worried that with the tax cut, we wouldn't have enough money to repair New York and D.C., and to help the families of the thousands I knew must have died." . . . Bestselling Indian novelist **Arundhati Roy** on Afghan war, in *New York Times*: "another act of terror against the people of the world." . . . **Ralph Nader**: "There is an escalation of the corporate takeover of the United States. . . . The ground and soil are ripe for a revolt by the American people." . . . **Kevin Klose** of NPR on U.S.-sponsored foreign-language broadcasts, in *New York Times*: "It's time to bring back the idea of an **Edward R. Murrow** in Arabic, modernized of course, using satellites and shortwave."

■ Red Cross says it has collected more blood than it can use; some blood banks may discard up to one-fifth of donations given since September 11. . . . California State University at Hayward women's studies department offers course called "The Sexuality of Terrorism." . . . Hollywood production company plans movie on life of GOP strategist **Lee Atwater**, based on **John Brady** biography *Bad Boy*, starring **Jay Mohr**.

■ Egyptian editor **Samir Ragab**, considered "voice of President **Hosni Mubarak**," in *Al Gomhuria*: "Is there any difference between America's bombing of innocent civilians in their homes and the callousness of the Taliban's mullahs?". . . President **Mohammad Khatami** of Iran on bin Laden, in *New York Times*: "I don't believe that his message really resonates strongly in the Muslim world." . . . Iraq forces university students to donate money to Taliban. . . . In Australia, conservative prime minister **John Howard** wins third term. . . . President **Eduard Shevardnadze** of Georgia fires entire cabinet. . . . U.N. Human Development Report lists Norway as no. 1 place in the world to live.

■ Evil *and* stupid? Pro-Taliban Pakistani group Afghan Defense Council pledges to "provide lifetime financial support to those who die fighting the Americans," reports UPI. **NR**

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THE WEEK

■ Former president Clinton is advertising for interns. Well, President Bush did tell us to go on with our normal lives.

■ The American Airlines flight that crashed after taking off from JFK in New York seems to have been the victim of mechanical failure, rather than terrorism. Small comfort to the passengers, almost all recent immigrants visiting relatives in the Dominican Republic, or to the Rockaway neighborhood where the plane crashed, home to so many casualties—firemen, policemen, Wall Street workers—of September 11. Pray for the newly afflicted, for the repeat sufferers, and for the tough battered city that is home to all of them.

■ Osama bin Laden claims he has nuclear weapons but—in a sudden burst of fondness for the civilized rules of warfare—would use them only to retaliate against an American chemical or biological attack. He's probably lying on both counts. But the U.S. should work urgently against the day when the caveman might be able to attain such weapons. While President Bush stares deeply into Vladimir Putin's soulful eyes, he should demand that he stop Russia's proliferation of missile and nuclear technology to Iran, Iraq, and other rogues, and secure Russia's "loose nukes." The administration, meanwhile, should help send Pakistan's nuclear weapons and material, like Dick Cheney, to an "undisclosed, secure location." As for bin Laden's boast, we should act as though it were true, and add it to the reasons to annihilate him and his allies as soon as possible.

■ In his interview with the journalist from the Pakistani newspaper *Dawn* (assuming it is authentic), Osama bin Laden used a lot of fancy footwork to almost take credit for his attack on the United States. "America and its allies are massacring us in Palestine, Chechnya, Kashmir, and Iraq. The Muslims have the right to attack America in reprisal. . . . We are carrying on the mission of our Prophet, Muhammed . . ." How will these semi-confessions affect the millions of Muslims in the Middle East, and elsewhere, who insist that Israel was responsible for the attacks? Not at all: They will continue to believe 1) that the Jews did it because they are evil, and 2) that Osama bin Laden did it because he is righteous. In the politics of fear and wish, the villains and the saviors are equally omnipotent; the childish spectator believes in both with equal fervor.

■ Republicans have no shortage of excuses for the defeat of their gubernatorial candidates in Virginia and New Jersey: In the former, Mark Earley's campaign was invisible for much of the summer; in the latter, the September attacks made it hard for Bret Schundler to get his message out; the president was too busy to help either one. Much of this is true. But the Republican parties of both states also doomed the campaigns. The Republican establishment in New Jersey stiffed Schundler because he's a conservative reformer. Republican legislators in Virginia kept the Republican governor from delivering on his popular campaign pledge to end the state's car tax, and failed to pass a budget. The post-election spin is, as always, that Republican candidates lose because they are too conservative. But in these cases, Republicans lost because their colleagues were not conservative, or competent, enough.

■ Michael Bloomberg, who won New York's mayoral race, was pushed into the end zone by the endorsement of hero-mayor Rudy Giuliani, and by the passivity of Al Sharpton. The Rev declined to campaign for Democrat Mark Green. In a contentious Democratic run-off, Green supporters pointed out that Fernando Ferrer would give Sharpton the keys to City Hall: reasonably enough, since Sharpton backed Ferrer with just such hopes in mind. But Green, after profiting from the tactic, had to disavow it in the general election, because the rules of New York City politicking hold that criticizing any black leader, for any reason, is racist (Giuliani broke those rules, but he was an anomaly). Bloomberg said one perfect thing in his victory speech: "New York is alive and well and open for business." He promised not to raise taxes, and one hopes his business instincts will hold him to his pledge and indeed move him to *cut* taxes. He will have to develop good instincts for dealing with race hustlers, though. He shook hands with a grinning Sharpton after his victory. Better count your fingers, Mr. Mayor.

■ In the home stretch of the race, Green ran ads accusing Bloomberg of having told a pregnant female employee to "kill it, kill it" (meaning, her unborn child). The alleged quote surfaced in a sexual-harassment suit brought by the employee, and Bloomberg vehemently denied saying it. Why? And why should Green be angry if he had? Both men are down-the-line supporters of abortion—late-term, partial-birth, without parental consent, whatever. Why should one citizen fear to offer another the consolations of the law? Are we living in a theocracy or something?

■ After nearly a year of work, several of the nation's top media organizations, including the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Wall Street Journal*, have finished their recount of the Florida results. And the winner is . . . George W. Bush! The media chad-counters found that Bush would have won even if the Supreme Court had not intervened to stop the examination of so-called undervotes that Al Gore so desperately wanted. That's nice, but it's old news: The *Miami Herald* and *USA Today* published a defini-

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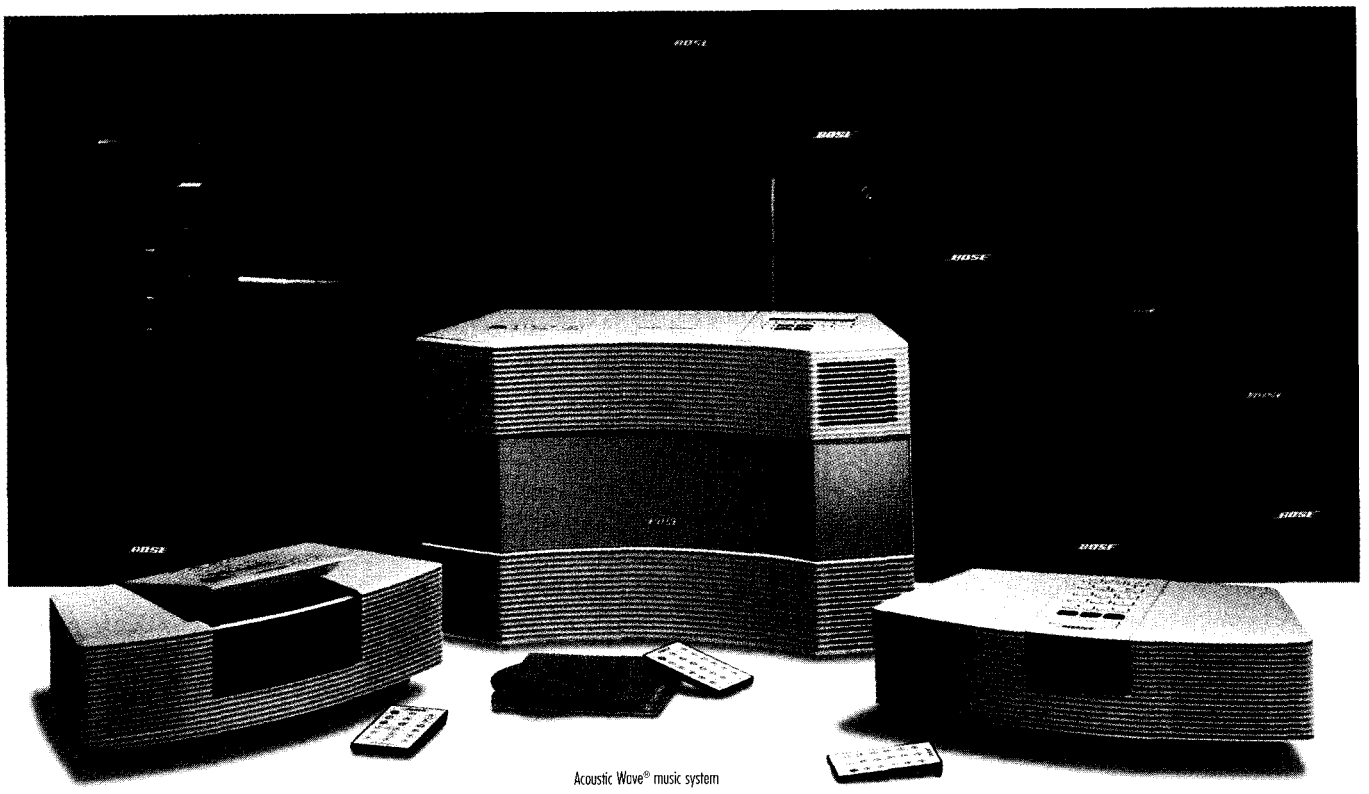

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tive undervote recount months ago. As it turns out, the only news in the new recount is the claim that Gore "might" have won if a statewide recount of both undervotes and overvotes had been conducted. Unfortunately for Democrats, that was something Gore did not want, that his lawyer specifically rejected in court, and for which there was no provision in Florida law. The media recount almost disappeared amid real news about war, terrorism, and plane crashes. But no doubt President Bush, busy as he is, appreciates the fact that the *Times*, the *Post*, and the *Journal* have said he may remain in the White House.

■ Attorney general John Ashcroft moved, it is said, to "overturn" Oregon's law permitting assisted suicide. Critics, mostly liberals, say that his action demonstrates that conservatives are hypocrites when they defend states' rights. But that appearance is solely the result of an imprecise formulation. What Ashcroft has done is to say, in effect, Look, Oregon voters can decide what the State of Oregon will or will not prosecute. But they cannot nullify federal law. And federal law prohibits doctors from using drugs to kill people deliberately. For the same reason, state referenda cannot legalize the medical use of marijuana; they can only register disagreement with the federal prohibition. Opponents of federal drug law should work to repeal or amend that law. Until that time, the question to ponder is not whether conservatives have abandoned federalism—but whether liberals, in taking up the cause of nullification, should pay homage to John C. Calhoun.

■ The Justice Department reached a settlement with Microsoft that imposes some restrictions on the company but preserves its "freedom to innovate"—the bottom line on which Bill Gates has always insisted. But the case is not yet over. Microsoft's competitors consider the settlement too lenient, and they have persuaded the attorneys general for nine states and the District of Columbia to press on. It will be up to the courts to remind the AGs that the purpose of antitrust law is to protect consumers, not competitors.

■ Few high-wire acts are quite so death-defying as Yasser Arafat's. Time and again, he plummets to disaster, only for some kind soul to catch him in a safety net at the last moment. His latest resort to violence in the intifada against Israel has left a thousand dead, while at the same time he pretends to be painfully shocked by Islamic or any other kind of terror. President Bush favors a Palestinian state, but refuses yet to shake the hand of the double-dealing Arafat. Condoleezza Rice, the national security adviser, tells him, "You cannot help us with al-Qaeda and hug Hezbollah." It's a new experience for Arafat that nobody is rushing forward with the safety net. If this continues, he may have to withdraw from the world-traveling terrorist circus.

■ "Blood debts have been repaid in blood. America has bombed other countries and used its hegemony to deny the natural rights of others without paying the price. Who until now has dared to avenge the hurts inflicted by unaccountable Americans?" So runs the voice-over in *Attack America*, a documentary that's flying off the shelves of book and video stores. Only the buyers aren't Palestinians, Pakistanis, or Saudis; they're Chinese. Even as Jiang Zemin smiled for the cameras with President Bush, his government's propaganda machine—through such outlets as Beijing Television, China Central, and Xinhua—was cranking out tapes, books, and games that praise the terrorist attacks as America's just deserts. Party officials, defending the materials, called them "educational." Many things changed on September 11. The fundamental nature of Chinese Communism, and of the Chinese regime, was not one of them.

■ The present war is drawing clearer the line between friend and foe. Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi proclaimed November 10 "U.S.A. Day" and, despite pressure from anti-war groups and his own government's appeasers, held a pro-America pageant in Rome that attracted 100,000 people. In a 40-minute speech, delivered amid a sea of American flags, Berlusconi credited America with saving Europe from tyranny in both world wars and maintaining peace for the last half-century. Echoing John Kennedy, he proclaimed: "We are all citizens of New York." Bravo, Silvio.

■ The Council on American-Islamic Relations recently issued a press release complaining of an "Islamophobic smear campaign." It clearly doesn't know what a serious campaign is. During the First World War, hundreds of school districts quit teaching German, and the city of Cincinnati banned pretzels from lunch counters. The *New York Times* had this to say about German-Americans: "Never since the foundation of the Republic has any body of men assembled here who were more completely subservient to foreign influence and a foreign power and none ever proclaimed the un-American spirit more openly." In multicultural America, of course, no such thing can be said of a minority group—even when some hateful portion of it will not say a bad word about bin Laden. Most Muslim immigrants know, along with everyone else, that the United States is a welcoming, tolerant, and wondrous society. The only smear campaign that's being waged is against the American people by the self-appointed leaders of Muslim America, the bin Laden apologists at CAIR.

■ Here is one man's story: Mohammad Junaid was born and raised in New York. His mother was on the ninth floor of the World Trade Center, and escaped, with the help of New York's policemen and firemen. Junaid—26 years old—has now gone to Afghanistan to fight for Osama bin Laden. In an interview with British television, he said, "I did not feel any remorse for the Americans [who died on September 11]. . . . I will kill every American that I see in Afghanistan. And I'll kill every American soldier that I see in Pakistan. . . . I do have an American passport, but at the end of the day, I'm a Muslim." He said that his family back home—including, presumably, his rescued mom—fully supports his decision. His grandfather had taught him that "your loyalty is with the Muslims. Even though you're in New York, your loyalty is with them." Let

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Class Hatred

Rick Geddes is an associate professor of economics at Fordham University and a research fellow of the Hoover Institution.

A widespread view in American academia today condemns antipathy directed at individuals because of their membership in particular groups but praises hostility to other disfavored groups. **Group aversion directed at a particular race is, for example, quite correctly denounced, yet hostility toward the economically affluent continues to be lauded.** An assessment of group hatred based on race versus class, however, suggests that the two are remarkably similar. Both rely on the identification and classification of people by categories. Both condemn a person not for any crime perpetrated by an individual but for his or her group identity. Both promote an "us versus them" mentality. Both have been manipulated by the state to extend its power. And both have been used to justify appalling violence against the disfavored group, resulting in humanity's worst genocides.

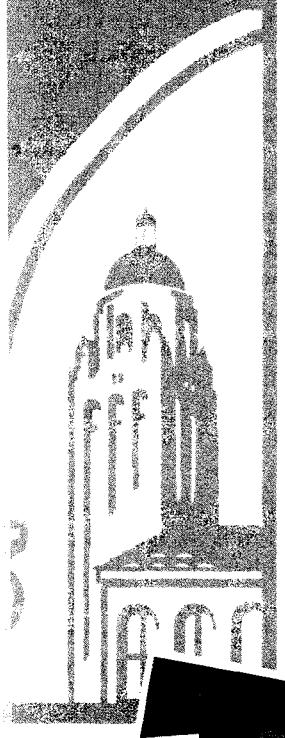
R. J. Rummel, a political science professor at the University of Hawaii, assembled the world's most extensive set of statistics on government-sponsored genocide. His data indicate that totalitarian regimes, relying on Marxist class-based hatred, were among the most murderous known to humanity. Stalin, for example, murdered approximately 55 million of his fellow citizens, while the Communist Chinese murdered about 35 million. Rummel's tally for Nazi Germany is 21 million. Consistent with Rummel's data, the *Black Book of Communism* states that at least 100 million people were murdered by communist regimes. Indeed, racial and class hatred were often effectively used together as political tools. Witness Hitler's attacks on "wealthy Jews."

Although genocide, in some cases, was undoubtedly motivated by a combination of racial and class hatred, that is certainly less true of the Communist Chinese. Moreover, Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge, motivated purely by class-based hatred, instigated genocide unparalleled in human history when measured as a percentage of the population. The Khmer Rouge used novel indicators of class, such as wearing eyeglasses, to identify its victims.

Class hatred may, in some ways, be even more pernicious than racial hatred. The damage from racism is limited by the availability of victims in that group. With classism, however, the group targeted for persecution can easily be redefined according to political necessity, as was frequently done by Stalin and Mao. Moreover, hatred based on relative affluence provides an immediate justification for the state to confiscate property, thus enhancing its appeal.

If the notion of hate speech places constraints on the language used in public discussion, it must certainly be applied to hatred based on class as well. Yet even with such a monstrous history, it is unlikely that classism will soon take its place alongside racism as an instrument of evil. It retains a patina of legitimacy since it is consistent with the views of many American academics. The fact that it continues to be used as a political tool without outcry from intellectuals is a sad commentary on our distorted state of historical understanding.

— Rick Geddes



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every American—especially those in the opinion- and policy-making class—contemplate Mohammad Junaid, and "identity politics," and immigration, and multiculturalism, and assimilation, and treason, and the quality of education—including what used to be "citizenship education"—and the meaning of America. This country could use not only re-moralizing, as the historian and social critic Gertrude Himmelfarb says; it could use re-patriotizing. Urgently.

■ Chelsea Clinton wrote an okay piece for *Talk* magazine about her experiences on 9/11 (she was in Manhattan that morning, about three miles from the World Trade Center). Thousands of 21-year-olds would have written better, tens of thousands would have written worse. What was gag-making about the piece were the comments of editor Tina Brown. "It has a kind of clarity, conviction, and honesty which really blew me away. She wasn't interested in spin or how did she look . . ." Why might she have been? Because celebrity pimps like Brown surround figures like Miss Clinton, waiting to throw bricks or strew rose petals. The latter response seems kindlier than the former (remember *Talk*'s savage picture spread on the Bush girls' drinking), but it is equally dangerous over the long run.

■ Some fifty high-level executives from the entertainment industry met with presidential adviser Karl Rove at a Beverly Hills hotel to discuss how Hollywood might help the war effort. Topics discussed were along the lines of public-service announcements to be shown in cinemas ("Careless matches aid the Axis!" and so on), USO tours, and the showing of new movies on military bases and warships. Everyone was at pains to make clear that the administration does *not* want to dictate the content of movies and TV shows. All very well, but if those movie moguls want our two cents' worth, here it is: How about retiring the military or ex-military psycho character that has been a staple of U.S. moviemaking for 30 years or more (*Apocalypse Now*, *Dead Poets Society*, *American Beauty*, etc.)? Oh, and while we're at it, how about a moratorium on movies in which smart lawyers outwit thick-skulled military brass trying to cover up shameful malfeasances (*A Few Good Men*, *The General's Daughter*, etc.)?

■ In our previous issue, we addressed what is known as the "mainstreaming" of pornography (or the "pornographication" of the mainstream). A recent story in the *New York Times* built on the theme. It interviewed a stripper (and author) named Lily Burana, who said, among other interesting things, that she used to find outfits for her act only at "boutiques that catered to the sex industry" (as the *Times* put it). "By 2000," however—this is Miss Burana talking now—"I was buying my outfits at Contempo," which is a shopping-mall chain aimed especially at young people. "The clothes for teenagers have become so strippified. I was a little alarmed. . . . All of a sudden I had this mad flash of protective conservatism. It was a cultural marker." Exactly—and there are lots of them. Cultural markers. The whole country needs "mad flashes of protective conservatism."

■ Very few things the U.S. government has done in our time contributed more to the advancement of human knowledge and the lifting up of the human spirit than the unmanned—and therefore relatively cheap—exploration of the solar system. Forty years ago, our neighbor planets and moons were no more than fuzzy blobs in our most powerful telescopes. The remoter ones were not even that; they were mere points of light. Now we have closeup photographs of all the known planets but one, and of a comet and several asteroids. We have tallied dozens of previously unknown moons and rings. We have landed our clever little devices on the rocky surfaces of the moon and Mars and sent them plunging into the atmosphere of Jupiter. Only distant Pluto has remained unvisited by U.S. spacecraft. Now Congress has approved $30 million for a robot mission to Pluto, to be launched in 2006 on an eight-year journey. If successful, this mission will complete the mapping of the solar system: an adventure in pure knowledge that has been pursued—sometimes with more, sometimes with less enthusiasm—under every administration since Kennedy's, to the everlasting glory of the United States and her people.

■ A 53-year-old man rushed into a suburban high school on November 8, ordered a 13-year-old girl to lie face down on a table, then administered ten strokes to her with a cane. Oh, no: *another* school atrocity? Not exactly. The perpetrator in the case was Ghankay Charles MacArthur Dapkana Taylor, president of the West African nation of Liberia, and the victim of the thrashing was his daughter Edena, one of the younger of his 30 known children. It had come to the president's attention that Edena, along with a teenage boy, had been disciplined by her school in the Liberian capital for "displaying improper behavior" on campus. President Taylor's press secretary spun that the flogging was "symbolic" and stressed that it should be seen in "the context of African culture." Young Edena is left nursing her "symbolic" stripes, while we are left reflecting, not for the first time, that perhaps there might be something to be said for this multiculturalism business after all.

Mazar-e Sharif, Finally

Like Doolittle's raid, it's a tonic;
Don Rumsfeld can pull up his socks.
Rivera is packing his Kipling,
Then dropping on Kabul for Fox.
In Mecca, the princes have steadied.
In Congress, the squishy take heart.
In Hollywood, Hillary's moguls
Do sex-hygiene films, for a start.

—W. H. von Dreele

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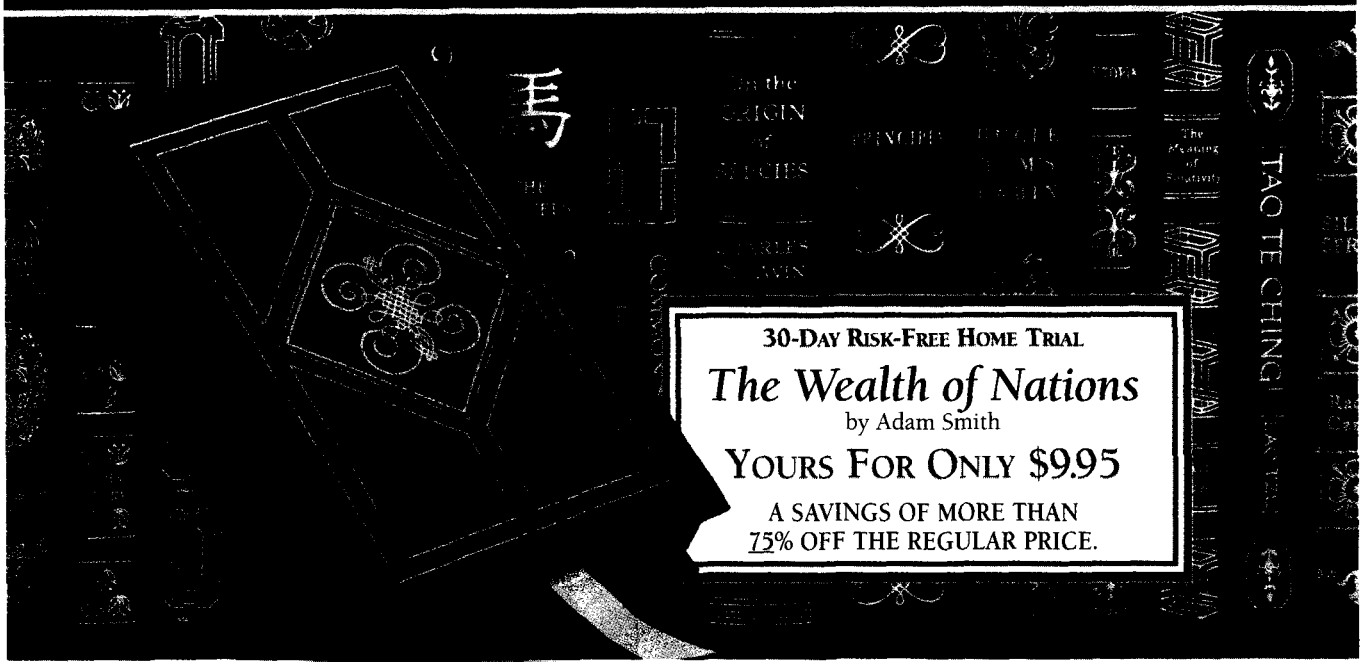

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■ Suppose you decide to embark on some research in higher mathematics. You will probably buy one of those software packages that allow you to do advanced symbolic manipulation on your computer—perhaps Wolfram Research, Inc.,'s *Mathematica*. Then you will need a textbook from which to learn the package: as it might be, the Cambridge University Press's *Beginner's Guide to Mathematica Version 4*. While slogging through chapter 24 of that book you are shown an example in which taking the wrong approach to a certain computation produces a number that is very wrong indeed, by a factor so large it would need over 800 digits to write it out. Note the authors: "If we didn't have the exact answer available for comparison, we might never know that our answer is off by 807 orders of magnitude. We might continue in blissful ignorance of how wrong we really are (say, as a Republican politician might). (See chapter 25 for an explanation of why one might actually want to have such a seemingly dangerous mode of computation available. We have no chapter on why one might want to have a Republican politician available.)" Well, perhaps one reason for having a Republican politician available is to explain to the editors of Cambridge University Press why sophomoric remarks about politics of any kind are out of place in a math textbook.

■ Ken Kesey, author, provocateur, died, age 66. There was an individualist impulse there—in the guying of Nurse Ratched, of course, but also in his portrayal of the villainous labor leader in *Sometimes a Great Notion*. There was something all-American too—not, as Tom Wolfe pointed out, of the American frontier or farm, which was the slot patronizing hipsters tried to put him in, but of empowered post-war teenagers. There was also too much: too many words, too many drugs, too much self-indulgence. Does Walt Whitman's good writing counterbalance all the American overwriting—by Kesey, Allen Ginsberg, Thomas Wolfe, and Whitman himself—that his example has blessed? A delicate question.

AT WAR

Eloquence and Force

THOSE who watch the progress of war from home must be patient with tactical execution, impatient with strategic indecision.

Almost from the beginning President Bush has expressed our injuries and our goals with eloquence and force. His speech to the United Nations General Assembly was as powerful as his speech to Congress, filled with lines bound for the headlines, and the history books: *(of the 9/11 murderers)* "[They] killed with equal indifference and equal satisfaction"; *(of the murderers' worldview)* "Few countries meet their exacting standards of brutality and oppression"; *(of their silent partners)* "The allies of terror are equally guilty of murder and equally accountable to justice"; *(of terror in general [cc. Yasser Arafat, Gerry Adams, et al.])* "No national aspiration, no remembered wrong can ever justify the deliberate murder of the innocent"; *(of our historical moment and its responsibilities)* "The time for sympathy has now passed; the time for action has now arrived."

The audience for such performances naturally wants to know who Bush's writers were; they should be proud. But the fact remains that every president, even in the age of the ghost, gives the speeches he deserves. They are written with him in mind, and he signs off on the texts. The aimless—among whom Bush, pre–9/11, was sometimes numbered—will utter bland, forgettable stuff. The inspired—Bush after 9/11—will be inspiring.

Does our strategy match our words? At moments it has looked as if we were collecting coalitions for their own sake, and dropping bombs in the Micawber-like hope that something would turn up. The events of early November in northern Afghanistan gave the lie to these reasonable worries. With support from the air and from special forces, the Northern Alliance, hitherto feeble and divided, has swept into almost every major northern town, including Kabul, the capital. The Taliban, which fled many positions without a fight, imagines that it is making a strategic retreat, and it may well counterattack. But its own commanders have begun to defect, making the universal obeisance to success. (Treachery, in this as in other tribal warrior societies, is not shameful. The warrior is the judge of his own honor, and so long as he is brave, it does not matter which side he is brave on.) The victories give the United States and its allies important bases hundreds of miles closer to the remaining fields of action, immeasurably improving our prospects for winter and spring.

The president and his planners say that Afghanistan is only Phase One of this war. Even Osama bin Laden, whose humiliation and death is one of our prime war aims, is only a pustule on the diseased body of the Middle East. After Afghanistan comes Iraq, which has been nursing its grievances and building germ and atomic weapons for ten years. After *it* comes Saudi Arabia, which, with its mysterious and still unexplained bin Laden connections, is the financial reservoir for terror. The Saudi royal family must understand that their days of indolence and irresponsibility are over. Whether they can transform themselves into competent rulers and reliable friends remains to be seen. In the meantime, we must rely more heavily on oil from the former Soviet Union and from our own reserves. Important sideline players may change sides—Pakistan may turn against us; Iran, whose Gorbachev-like President Khatami hopes to manage a sullen populace, may turn toward us.

There is a lot of work, sorrow, and nasty surprises ahead. In the short run, our enemies will try to embarrass us with the squabbles and disorder that will surely attend the successes of our native allies. All the more important that we tell the world, and never forget, how the people of northern Afghanistan greeted their liberation. A child in Kabul flew a kite (banned under the Taliban fanatics). Men shaved off their beards, and women took off their head-to-toe burqas (required by the Taliban). Restaurateurs and ordinary citizens played music, and dug up buried televisions and VCRs. "All the restrictions, on television, on shaving, on women," one shopkeeper told the *New York Times*. "The Koran says nothing about such things. The Taliban people are a bunch of illit-

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erates." Such scenes remind us that, contrary to the despots and the holy killers, and to our own multiculturalists, we are not arrayed against an opaque and monolithic Other. Many people in the world wish our destruction, and their leaders certainly wish their own advantage. But many more retain the ordinary human desires that every decent political system seeks to satisfy and manage, and that every religion worthy of the name hopes to instruct and redeem. When the Taliban's fellow tyrants fall, there will be dancing in the streets.

RUSSIA

Dancing with the Bear

PRESIDENT BUSH and President Vladimir Putin have looked into each other's soul, and admired what they have seen there. A love-in is replacing the more usual formalities of high diplomacy. A seismic event like September 11 can bring about unforeseeable consequences of this kind, and that is altogether to the good. But both presidents are very level-headed, and behind the lovey rhetoric is a community of interest. Islamic extremism in the Caucasus threatens the unity of the Russian Federation. Terrorists, presumed to be Chechens, have bombed apartment buildings in Moscow and elsewhere, with huge loss of life. Al-Qaeda and other networks spill across the borders to destabilize the Central Asian republics. When Putin says that he wants to see terrorism "destroyed, uprooted, liquidated," the verbs may sound Soviet, but they are to the point.

The former Russian president, Boris Yeltsin, believed that he could play Europe off against the United States. To that end, he kicked up a huge fuss about the admission to NATO of eastern European countries once in the Soviet empire and, prospectively, of the Baltic republics. Putin has been quick to perceive that the Europeans are absorbed in games of hide-and-seek in Brussels and have little or nothing to offer Russia. NATO has verbalized about Islamic terror, but has no effective role in Afghanistan. With the exception of Britain, the Europeans are happy to posture, and Putin is leaving them to it. Better, more productive, for him to turn to the United States, to declare a cost-free willingness to consider Russian membership in NATO and to negotiate new terms for nuclear-arms control and to allow for a missile defense that is going to be put in place anyhow.

Russia is not going to enjoy democracy and capitalism for years to come. But again unlike Yeltsin, Putin is laying proper foundations for a future of freedom and prosperity. He has neutered the rump of the Communist party that until recently obstructed the Duma (the parliament). He has brought to heel some of the more abusive oligarchs and provincial governors. He has cut taxes. Economic growth is impressive, and Putin is proposing the country's oil and natural-gas resources as a secure alternative to Middle Eastern sources. All that is required in order to cement a brilliant new partnership, he likes to say, is that the United States shed its past fears. At face value, this is what a complete political somersault looks like.

When the death of a rival statesman was announced, the great Prince Metternich, then the Austrian chancellor, asked, "I wonder what he means by that." We may wonder quite what Putin means with the obituary of yesterday's Russia that he is proclaiming. Russia has always been a master of grand strategy, highly skilled at gathering and projecting power even in disadvantageous circumstances, as today. Actions are what counts. Russia is selling nuclear technology to Iran and arms to Iraq, and further arguing that sanctions ought to be lifted. These sales are depicted as legitimate business. Both cases have the potential for a future crisis on a far larger scale than the crackdown on the Taliban and al-Qaeda.

Having said that, and keeping fingers crossed, it is a relief as novel as it is extraordinary to be worrying about the possible perils of close Russian friendship rather than the certainties of arms-length Russian hostility.

AUSTRALIA

Rumbles from Down Under

JOHN HOWARD'S comfortable victory over the Australian Labour party in the recent election has been little noticed in our media—even though it was the third victory in a row for the conservative Liberal-Country coalition, achieved against phenomenal odds, and bearing great significance for the politics of America and the rest of the First World.

And that is understandable because in the eyes of international political elites it was the wrong victory for the wrong party on the wrong issue. Three months ago, Howard's party was trailing by as much as 20 percent in the polls; the economy was not delivering the strong growth generally needed for government election victories.

Then the SS *Tampa*, a Norwegian-owned ship, was seized in Indonesian waters by its Afghan and Pakistani passengers and ordered to head for Australia. The international community, led by such "eminent persons" as the U.N. commissioner for human rights, Mary Robinson, at once appealed to Australia to admit these "asylum seekers"—even though under international law the ship should have headed not for Australia but for the nearest Indonesian port. Most governments echoed these appeals. So did church spokesmen, "human rights" advocates, and the great and the good in Australia itself.

Ignoring these pressures, Howard instructed the Australian navy to prevent the boat from entering Australian waters—and promptly initiated a major political campaign to defend Australia against migrant-smuggling. He argued that, whatever international law said, independent nation-states had a right to control their own borders.

After September 11—when terrorists exploited loopholes in immigration policy to murder thousands—these arguments sounded not only courageous but farsighted. Howard won a third term of office with an increased majority.

If Howard's victory marks the first election decided on the refugee asylum and immigration issues, it will not be the last. There is a fast-growing trade in smuggling migrants from the Third World—over the Rio Grande into the United States,

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through southern Spain into the European Union, across the Indian Ocean to Australia, etc. Millions of people are hammering on the doors of the First World; voters are increasingly wary of admitting too many. As a result, the political importance of immigration, refugee policy, multiculturalism, and official bilingualism will surely rise.

These new battles will be bitter and unpredictable. Howard won; but a substantial minority despises him for it. There are powerful elites in the courts, the media, and the government bureaucracy that favor open borders and multiculturalism. They do not hesitate to stigmatize their opponents as racist or xenophobic.

But popular opinion will support the existing nation-state—with its own people, language, culture, and institutions—against those who would like to reshape it as a multicultural haven for ever-larger numbers of immigrants. Australia's Labour party lost a lot of its traditional blue-collar workers to Howard's patriotic appeal. But Howard probably lost some upper-middle-class voters, too—just as the GOP has lost upper-class WASP votes across the northern tier of the United States in recent years. The difference is that, by refusing to give political expression to popular discontent with open-borders policies, Republicans have largely missed the opportunities that John Howard has seized.

■ NOTES & ASIDES ■

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: I agree with you and your correspondent Mr. Lucas (Sept. 17) that "apparently died of a heart attack" is more accurate than the journalistic cliché, "died of an apparent heart attack," but why be accurate when you can be peculiarly English? The use of an adjective where an adverb would be more logically correct was a favorite device of P. G. Wodehouse. For examples:

I balanced a *thoughtful lump* of sugar on the teaspoon.

He waved a *concerned cigar*.

His eyes widened and an *astonished piece of toast* fell from his grasp.

As I sat in the bath tub, soaping a *meditative foot* . . .

Horace was flicking a *languid feather duster* over an antique chair.

Sometimes Wodehouse pulls the converse over on you. You expect an adjective (the fat butler) but get an adverb:

The butler was *standing mountainously* beside the tea table, staring in a sort of trance at a plateful of anchovy sandwiches . . .

The adverbial adjective is part of the spoken language, not just a literary invention. Here is a football play-by-play announcer on TV, remarking on a quarterback who had to call a time-out at an inopportune time: "And he calls a *disgusted time-out*."

Isn't it a wonderful language?

Prof. Richard L. Leed
Cornell University
Ithaca, N.Y.

Dear Professor Leed: It is indeed, and your resourcefulness in making your point is also wonderful.

Cordially, WFB

Dear Mr. Buckley: This is how I got in trouble in school: correcting the teacher.

When Mr. Lucas expressed concern about a person who "died of an apparent heart attack," you offered the improvement, "apparently died of a heart attack."

It seems to me that this merely moves the uncertainty from the cause of death to the death itself, surely a settled issue by the time it makes the press. The accurate phrase, "died of what was apparently a heart attack," is a mouthful, for either the talking head or the copywriter (not to mention the listener/reader). "Died of an apparent heart attack" seems like a reasonable compromise that does not introduce any ambiguity.

As for those personal electronic devices: Is it okay if we leave the pacemakers and hearing aids on, the better to hear the safety messages and to respond appropriately?

Best regards,
Lew Flagg
Milford, Mass.

Dear Mr. Flagg: I'd say so. And the hearing aids will whistle even after the heart (apparently) stops beating.

Cordially, WFB

Dear Mr. Buckley: Apparently died? "Judge not according to the appearance." John 7:24.

Kalman I. Nulman
New York, N.Y.

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: Re your column "The War Parties at Work" (Sept. 17): I propose that the United States and the State of California offer up the west central portion of California to become the New Israel. A strip reaching from Santa Cruz to Santa Barbara on the coast, extending inland to Interstate 5, would be equivalent to the current Israeli landmass. The terrain is similar and should support crops and industries like those found in Israel. The New Jerusalem might be set just north of Santa Barbara.

The tough part is convincing the Israelis (and God?) that a new Holy Land is feasible, and convincing citizens of the U.S. and California to make this supreme offer. Cheers might come from the rest of the world, particularly the Palestinians. The Israelis would have some oil to play with, and they might educate the Californians on energy. The cost would be high, but less than the money and lives lost in a world war. Perhaps even God would smile.

Joe Kunkel
Friendswood, Tex.

Dear Mr. Kunkel: Well! That's *half* the battle!

Cordially,

—WFB

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■ AT WAR ■

Why West Is Best

Secrets—or rather, obvious ingredients—of the Good Society

PAUL JOHNSON

No such thing as a perfect society exists in the world or ever will. But the Good Society can and does emerge from time to time, and is far more likely to exist within the orbit of the Western system than in any other. Why is this?

To begin with, consider the historic blend of two valuable but imperfect and distinct moral/legal systems—the Greco-Roman and the Judeo-Christian—which together are much more than the sum of their parts. All of us desire moral order. All of us wish for justice. The chief problem that faces a civilization is how to translate morality and justice into a workable system of law. The Greeks took legal concepts from numerous ancient societies, notably the Medes and Persians, but they brought to the science of law the spirit of philosophic inquiry, their own unique gift to humanity. They probed the nature of justice and the validity of morals, and thus infused law-making with a new dynamic: the endless quest for truth, viability, and endurance.

The Romans, in turn, built on this method, evolving a code that worked effectively over the world's largest and longest-lasting empire, enduring in one form or another for two millennia. What the Romans struggled towards was the notion of rule by law, rather than by mere men, and this involved the supremacy of a political constitution, which men, however powerful, were obliged to obey. The attempt ultimately failed, Rome became an oriental dictatorship of god-emperors, the rule of law collapsed, and, in due course, so did Roman civilization itself, in both its Western and Byzantine forms.

Mr. Johnson, the British journalist and historian, is the author of many books, including *A History of Christianity* and *A History of the Jews*.

Bettman/Corbis

Making kings and governments subject to the rule of law

However, from the 5th and 6th centuries onwards, Roman notions of law and its rule were reinforced and transformed by Judeo-Christianity. The Jews were as devoted to law as the Romans. They saw the law as God-made, and under its rule all, from kings and high priests to shepherds, were equal: That is why the great 1st-century Jewish philosopher, Philo of Alexandria, called Judaism a "theocratic democracy." The Christians took over the principle of equality under the moral law and applied it to both the law codes of the Germanic north, based upon tribal consultations, and those of the Romance south, based upon Roman digests. The clergy evolved their own canon law and, between the 11th and the 16th centuries, there was a struggle between secular and clerical systems. The result was a felicitous compromise: neither theocratic law (as in Islamic states), nor wholly secular law, since the codes recognized natural law (as interpreted by Christianity) as the basis of all justice.

The rule of law was not established in the West without conflict. The constitutional struggle that produced in 1215 the Magna Carta, the first English Statute of the Realm (still in force), the English Civil War of 1640–60, and the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688, the American Revolution of the 1770s and 1780s, producing the first modern written constitution, and the French Revolution of 1789, leading to the creation of the Napoleonic law code (both these last, as amended, still in force) are all episodes in the successful effort to make even kings and governments subject to the rule of law. The process continues, the latest salient event being the collapse of the supra-legal Communist dictatorship in Russia in 1991 and subsequent attempts, as yet incomplete, to establish the rule of law for the first time in Russia and its devolved territories.

From this long history, it has become evident that equality in law cannot be finally ensured without the mass participation of the public. But it is important to understand that the rule of law must be established first before democracy can successfully evolve. That is the great political lesson of Western civilization. It explains why democracy has quickly collapsed in all those (mainly Third World) countries where the rule of law was weak or nonexistent. A notable exception has been India, which—with all its weaknesses—still maintains democracy because the rule of law, thanks to the genius of Macaulay, took root there under British rule.

Where the rule of law exists, continually reinforced by an evolving democracy, liberty too takes root. The point was succinctly made by Thomas Hobbes, who, together with his follower John Locke, was the determining political philosopher in the evolution of both the British and the U.S. constitutions. "The silence of the laws is the freedom of the subject," wrote Hobbes: Where the law does not specifically prohibit, the citizen is free to do as he pleases. In unfree or Oriental societies, the assumption is reversed, and the freedom to do any individual action depends on favor, tradition (as interpreted by the absolute ruler or his agents), or corruption.

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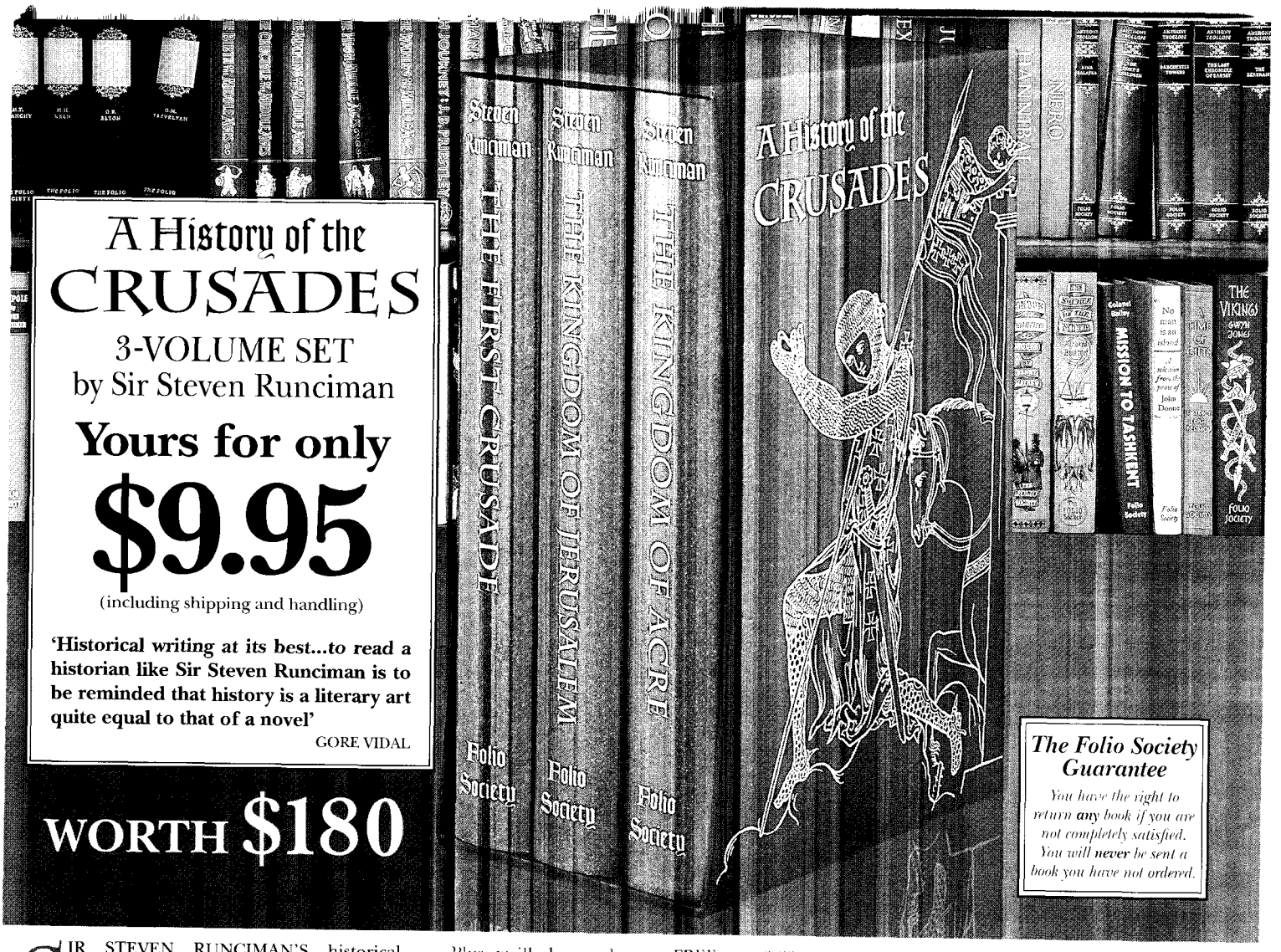

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The freedom enjoyed in Western society under the rule of law and constitutional government explains both the quality of its civilization and its wealth. In the early Middle Ages, Islamic societies enjoyed some freedom in transmuting the Greeks' knowledge and spirit of inquiry, but this came to an end in the 13th century, which was precisely the point when the Western university system took off. Where the quest for knowledge is relatively, and now almost absolutely, unrestrained, the public benefit will be great, especially where the certainty of the law ensures that knowledge is rewarded. This is exactly the combination that is the foundation of wealth-creation.

■

Capitalism is a force of nature, which explains its extraordinary fecundity, adaptability, and protean diversity.

■

Society in the West was establishing a consistent pattern of wealth-making even in the Middle Ages. From the 15th century, two factors—the invention of double-entry bookkeeping and of printing from movable type—were joined by six others, all consequences of the rule of law and of (virtual) equality under the law. These were the invention of the legal corporation (later including the limited-liability company and the trust); the development of a clear legal doctrine of marriage and inheritance; the invention of freehold in real estate and of banks operating as sure deposits for liquid wealth (both serving as the basis for lending and investment in mercantile and industrial enterprise); the development of copyright law; the inability of government to confiscate or tax individual property except by due process; and, finally, the invention of an immense range of legal devices, from commercial and personal insurance to stock exchanges (to promote, protect, maximize, and employ savings efficiently).

From these dozen or so advantages and their interaction, capitalism evolved. It is not, strictly speaking, an "ism," but a process of nature, which at a certain state of human development—the rule of law and a measure of personal freedom being the most important ingredients—occurs spontaneously, as millions of ordinary people go about their business in as efficient a manner as they know how. It is, then, a force of nature, which explains its extraordinary fecundity, adaptability, and protean diversity. It is as much a product of Western civilization as the university and the library, the laboratory and the cinema, relativity theory and psychotherapy. Coca-Cola and McDonald's are not alternatives to the Metropolitan Opera and the New York Public Library: They are all four products of a wealth-creating and knowledge-producing process based on freedom and legal certainty.

Moreover, because capitalism is based on human nature, not dogma, it is self-correcting. The freedom of the market enables these corrections to be made all the time, to short- and long-term problems. The expression "the crisis of capitalism" is therefore misleading. Capitalism moves through continual crises, major and minor, absorbing their lessons and so continually increasing productivity and living standards in the long run.

Indeed it is the protean ability of Western civilization to be self-critical and self-correcting—not only in producing wealth but over the whole range of human activities—that constitutes its most decisive superiority over any of its rivals. And it is protean not least in its ability to detect what other societies do better, and incorporate such methods into its own armory. All the other systems in the world, notably the Japanese, the Chinese, and the Indian, have learned much from the West in turn, and benefited thereby. The Islamic world has been the least willing to adopt the West's fundamental excellences. That is why it remains poor (despite its wealth of raw materials), unfree, and unhappy. Its states are likely to have uneasy relations with the West until Islam reforms itself, embraces the rule of law, introduces its own form of democracy, and so becomes a protean player in the modern world. **NR**

■ **AT WAR** ■

Islam in Action

Extremism now, and everywhere. What later?

DAVID PRYCE-JONES

PRESIDENT BUSH, Prime Minister Blair, and Pope John Paul II are among leaders repeating a mantra that Islam is peaceful and tolerant. The firmest of distinctions must be drawn between the religion and terrorism carried out in its name. There is no quarrel with Islam as such, but only a just war against Osama bin Laden and the Taliban regime behind him.

One understands the great and the good, of course, and the worthiness of their endeavor. This war is more difficult to win without the support of states adjoining, or close to, landlocked Afghanistan. With the exception of China, these states are Muslim. It costs little to appease the Islamic susceptibilities of nervous allies, and tempt them into an Allied coalition. And haven't we all been conditioned by yesterday's multiculturalism into thinking that the world's cultures and religions are already blending into a harmonious adult-education class in perpetuity?

But everyone has been overtaken by events. Political extremism has been for some time the dominant expression of Islam. What's at stake is the place that peace and tolerance are to have in the Islam of the future.

Ayatollah Khomeini promoted the exclusive virtue of Islam, and in his native Iran he was the first to show how this assumption of superiority could be exploited to empower a regime. Self-seeking rulers were quick to follow his

Mr. Pryce-Jones is an NR senior editor. Among his many books is *The Closed Circle: An Interpretation of the Arabs*, which will soon be reprinted by Ivan R. Dee.

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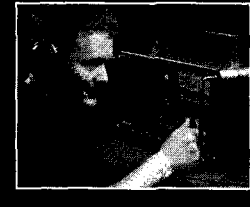

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example, notably in Nigeria, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Sudan, and it's not a coincidence that these countries are now so fragile. In imitation, revolutionary individuals and groups also fastened on Islam as the means for levering themselves into power—al-Qaeda is one of 175 such groups counted in the Middle East by R. Hrair Dekmejian, a specialist on the subject. Secular rulers tried to defend themselves by establishing Islamic credentials, mostly bogus. Anwar Sadat set up photo opportunities at prayer in the mosque (which didn't save him from being murdered by an Islamic group). In Syria, Hafiz Assad—himself from the minority Alawi sect—claimed to be a mainstream Muslim. Muammar Qaddafi painted the main square of Tripoli an Islamic green, and Saddam Hussein has placed the name of God on the Iraqi flag.

The Muslim world has long been immersed in tyranny, corruption, and poverty. Intellect and reason are the tools for analyzing and repairing this predicament, but whoever tries that approach in these dictatorships risks prison and worse. Islamic extremism fills the intellectual vacuum. It is a protest against misrule. It casts the blame for failure onto others. It offers an all-encompassing identity against everyone else, and a clean sweep too. Power is the end-result of it all.

Commentators have usually argued that Islamic extremism is irrational, and so must prove a short-lived and futile chapter in the history of messianic cults. I too plead guilty to that. But in the meantime it has inflamed the relationships of Muslims among themselves and with outsiders. The struggle to mobilize and achieve power by means of Islamic extremism has had brutal consequences. Every country of the Islamic world has had the recent experience of open or latent civil war, of coups and assassinations of rulers. In Sudan, Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq, Lebanon and Algeria and elsewhere, untold numbers have been killed, and millions are refugees or in exile.

Right round the boundaries of the Islamic world, Islam offers neither peace nor tolerance. The Muslim component in the territorial conflicts between Pakistan and India over Kashmir, and between the Palestinians and Israel, has so far thwarted all efforts at compromise. In Kosovo and Chechnya, Kurdistan, Lebanon and even Cyprus, in the Philippines, in Malaysia and Indonesia, Muslims are fighting on issues that ought to be susceptible to rational negotiation. But rule throughout the Muslim world is absolute—in other words, without genuine power-sharing. Whether the warfare is led by states or revolutionary groups, the net result is that Muslims are fighting as Muslims against the complete range of their neighbors: Hindus, Jews, Malays, animists, Buddhist and Communist Chinese alike, and many different Christians, in Sudan and Indonesia, Catholic Filipinos and Coptic Egyptians, Orthodox Russians and Serbs.

■

Right round the boundaries of the Islamic world, Islam offers neither peace nor tolerance.

■

A Nigerian journalist, Ulanugu Eneh, has written, "The greatest threat to Nigeria as a nation as presently constituted is Islamic extremism." In Sudan, in almost two decades of war, the government has killed about 2 million Christians and animists, and introduced Sharia law, jihad—or holy war—and forced conversion to Islam. In April this year, over 50 Christians were arrested at the Episcopal All Saints Cathedral in Khartoum, and most of them, men and women, were then jailed and flogged. At Khartoum University, over 20,000 Christian books were burned or vandalized. In Algeria, conversion from Islam is forbidden. At least 100,000 Muslims have been killed in the civil war there, and in addition to these atrocities was the murder of Bishop Clavier of Oran, and the beheading of seven Trappist monks. At Hodeidah in Yemen, three nuns from Mother Teresa's order were murdered. On returning to Somalia from America, Prof. Haaji, a Christian convert, was shot dead. A bomb in a Christian bookshop in Gaziantep in Turkey killed a four-year-old boy. Gunmen have just killed Christians at worship in their church at Bahawalpur in Pakistan. Egyptian Islamic extremists regularly vandalize Coptic villages. Muslim converts to Christianity there are prosecuted under a law prohibiting the use of religion to "ignite heavenly strife." Saad Eddin Ibrahim, an outstanding Muslim academic who has campaigned in behalf of justice for Copts, is now in prison on a charge of "tarnishing Egypt's image."

Imperialism is a highly complex interplay between conqueror and conquered. The Europeans built their empires in the past through confidence in themselves and their culture, but they could never have succeeded in colonizing unless the local peoples correspondingly doubted the strength and validity of their own culture and society. Overwhelmed, the local peoples generally adopted the values that accompanied European power. Now, in the compass of opinion reaching from Khomeini to bin Laden, European values have lost their force, and Muslim imperialism reemerges from the historical shadows where it has been invisible for so long.

The 20th century saw immense movements of populations, as dispossessed people fled wherever they could in search of a better life. Millions of Muslims have settled in the West, and many more aspire to. Most major Western cities have Islamic cultural institutes and mosques and charities. Imams and community leaders on the one hand, and multiculturalists on the other, have worked as proselytizers and missionaries. Islam is the fastest-growing of all religions, and in several European countries Muslims already outnumber the Christians who attend church. In Britain, a poll reveals that four in ten British Muslims believe Osama bin Laden is justified in his attacks of September 11. Just over two-thirds stated that their Muslim faith was more important to them than their British nationality. Polls elsewhere in Europe show comparable findings.

This is the milieu now demonstrating in support of Osama bin Laden and providing volunteers for his network, and raising funds through charities that are fronts for extremism. Time will show whether these are the temporary troubles of integration, or on the contrary a reverse colonialism in an age when Westerners in their turn seem to doubt

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the strength and validity of their own culture and society.

In interviews and broadcasts on the al-Jazeera television network, Osama bin Laden speaks for alienated Muslims. He makes a habit of contradicting the great and the good in the West. For him, Islam is not in the least peaceful or tolerant, but on the contrary engaged in a war, and a holy war at that, jihad on a global scale. He lumps together the United States, the "Russian bear," the United Nations that to him is "nothing but a tool of crime," and Israel. In his imagination, every Muslim is engaged in the same struggle against a Judeo-Christian conspiracy to destroy Islam, and Muslims must now rise up and put an end to the wicked conspirators. Khomeini revived the medieval concept of a war between Islam and the West, and bin Laden has succeeded in making a contemporary reality of it.

■

For bin Laden, Islam is engaged in a war, and a holy war at that, jihad on a global scale.

■

Those who perceive themselves as victims of powerful and far-reaching conspiracy also grant themselves every right to go to war against it. Islam will empower them and free them, handing the infidels their due deserts. A leader is calling. All they need is weaponry. A golden age will be coming true, in which—as the placards proclaimed at the recent racist jamboree in Durban—"Islam Will Dominate the World."

Rulers and revolutionaries alike in Muslim states face choices that will define the future. Either they enter a world order open to reason, or they accept the bin Laden strategy that jihad is the exclusive expression of Islam. Time is running out for fence-sitters like the Egyptians and Saudis, and that goes for Saddam Hussein, Yasser Arafat, and those 175 armed groups, too. Continued rejection of equality and power-sharing can only lead to the sort of backlash from the rest of the world now unfolding in Afghanistan, and then it's a long goodbye to peace and tolerance. **NR**

■ AT WAR ■

The Man from Hopeless

Bill Clinton: Unfit to be ex-president

MARK STEYN

SINCE September 11, whenever I've so much as mentioned Bill Clinton even en passant, a torrent of missives has arrived along the lines of, "Oh, come on, get over it. He's gone, and you right-wing nuts are the only ones who haven't moved on." I have a bit of sympathy for this point of view. When the globetrotting high-end lounge act, making a rare appearance back in the United States, turned up on the streets of Lower Manhattan a couple of days after 9/11, he looked for the first time oddly anachronistic—stuck in the day before yesterday, like some Lite-FM disc jockey who doesn't realize the station's switched formats. It's tempting to leave him there, beached by the tides of history. On the other hand, if we members of the Vast Right-wing Conspiracy don't get back to our daily routine of obsessive Clinton-bashing, *then the terrorists will have won.*

In 1940, when Neville Chamberlain resigned as prime minister, his successor Winston Churchill asked him to stay on as leader of the Conservative party and to remain in the cabinet. Chamberlain did so, serving loyally under Churchill until ill health forced him from office. He died four weeks later, a mere six months after he left 10 Downing Street, a little over a year after war was declared. Churchill paid him handsome tribute and cried at his bier. The war had accelerated Chamberlain's cancer: In his last months, he was lost in introspection and wracked with guilt. I'm not saying Bill Clinton's the designated Chamberlain of World War III—yet. For one thing, even Chamberlain wasn't Chamberlain when he died: It was some while before posterity chiseled him the one-word epitaph "Appeaser." And, in fairness to him, the overwhelming majority of the British people supported "appeasement," just as most of the American people were happy to string along on an eight-year holiday from history. But, given his own desultory responses to Osama bin Laden's ever bolder provocations, you'd think even Bill Clinton might find time for a little introspection and quiet self-assessment.

Instead, amazingly, September 11 seems only to have confirmed America's Ex-President-for-Life in his indestructible view of his own indispensability. Any day now, he'll forget himself and reprise his favorite impeachment-era catchphrase: "I need to get back to work for the American people." As he told Paul McCartney's girlfriend—that's another difference between now and then: To get the scoop on what Chamberlain was thinking, you didn't need to ask someone who was dating one of the Ink Spots—anyway, as he told Macca's gal pal, he feels he'd do a better job than Bush as he's got more experience. This was marginally more tastefully formulated than the confidences quoted in the *New York Times*, when he regretted that the deaths of 5,000 Americans hadn't happened on his watch. This is a novel constitutional concept: a man unfit to be ex-president.

And then, of course, there was his astonishing speech at Georgetown University. He supports the war, you'll be relieved to hear, but he thinks we are "not blameless." Let's assume that, intentionally or otherwise, Clinton was being self-serving: His task, therefore, was to find a "root cause" pre-dating January 1993. As it turns out, he overshot the mark and wound up tracing September 11 back to A.D. 1095: "Those of us who come from various European lineages are not blameless," he told his audience. "In the First Crusade, when the Christian soldiers took Jerusalem, they first burned a synagogue with 300 Jews in it, and proceeded to kill every woman and child who was Muslim on the Temple mount. The contemporaneous descriptions of the event describe soldiers walking on the Temple mount, a holy place to

Mr. Steyn is senior North American columnist for Britain's Telegraph Group.

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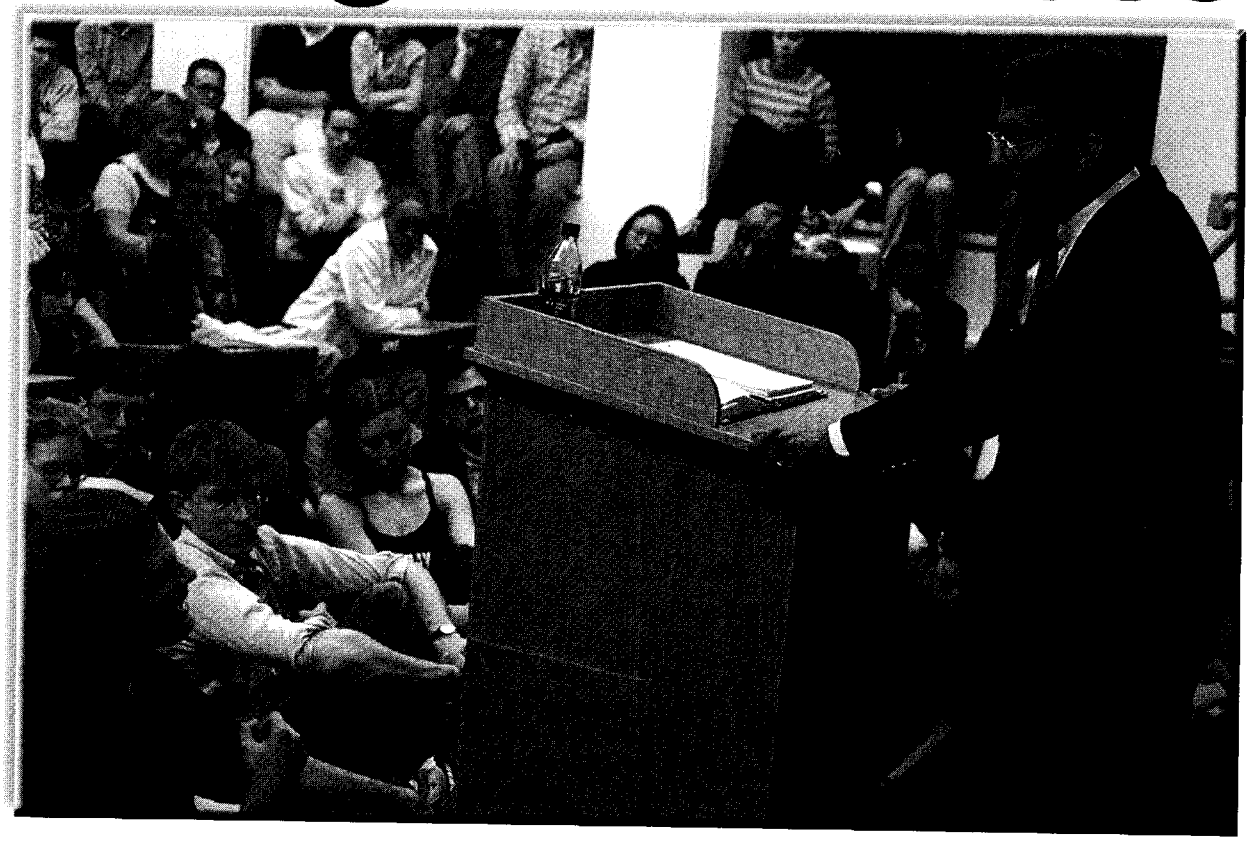

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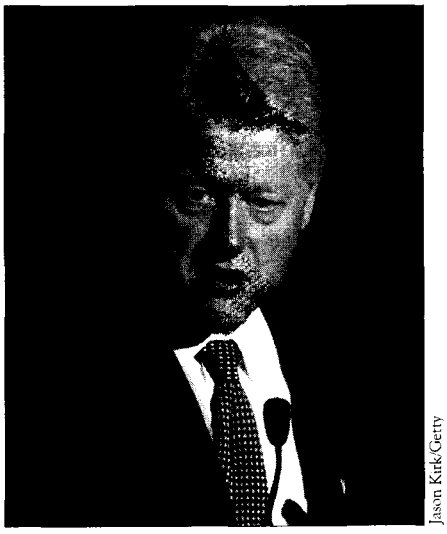
Christians, with blood running up to their knees. I can tell you that that story is still being told today in the Middle East and we are still paying for it."

Ah, Bill: always ready to 'fess up to someone else's sins. The First Crusade: How come that got left off his whirlwind 1998 Apology Tour of Africa? In Ghana, he apologized for the Cold War, and in Uganda he apologized for slavery. Surely he could have slipped in a bonus lip-biter for the Crusades while in Nigeria or Sudan. But no doubt his young audience at Georgetown trooped out fortified with new arguments: "Violence only breeds violence. This is blowback for 1095."

Ten ninety-five—that's 906 years. Even Paula Jones would have settled. If ever there was an occasion for the great Clintonian invocation that "we need to move on," a grudge over the First Crusade is surely it. Shortly after Pearl Harbor, the Japanese took Tarawa in the Gilbert Islands and arrested 22 British watchkeepers. The following year, they tied them to trees, beheaded them, and burned their bodies in a pit. You won't find that in the Geneva Convention. The Japanese fought a filthy war, but here we are less than 60 years later, and Britain and Japan sit side by side at G-7 meetings. If America is really "paying for" events that occurred seven centuries before the Republic's founding, then that's the Muslim world's problem, not ours. As it happens, Muslims slaughtered thousands of Christians, but on the whole your average American or New Zealander is inclined to let bygones be bygones: Hey, why let it fester for the better part of another millennium? Western cultures do not traditionally hold people responsible for the sins of their fathers, never mind great-great-great-grandfathers—at least not until Bill Clinton decided that, while anyone can take responsibility for things they actually did, real moral courage is strictly retro.

So as the speech went on, these were the only examples of "terrorism" Clinton could come up with: Christians killing Muslims, plantation owners killing slaves, settlers killing Native Americans, Gen. Sherman burning farms ("a relatively mild form of terrorism"), and "even today," he concluded, "we still have the occasional hate crime rooted in race, religion, or sexual orientation. So terror has a long history." Put like that, the Taliban must be kicking themselves for falling out with a bunch of Jew-slaughtering, slave-owning, sodomite-killing natural allies like us. There's no shortage of "moral equivalence" around at the moment, but most of it's out on the fringes—*New Yorker* writers, Ivy League Arabists, the school board of Madison, Wisc., leathery old lefties on the *Guardian*, wacky feminists from the University of British Columbia . . . So it's a little weird to see a former president joining their ranks—Chamberlain didn't spend the summer of 1940 giving speeches pointing out excesses from the Wars of the Roses and the Norman Conquest.



Jason Kirk/Getty

The farce continues.

But it's not really surprising from Bill Clinton, who, after all, introduced the country to the first "moral equivalency" presidency. He didn't invent all the nostrums of his era, but he was their principal beneficiary. A culture that makes its First Commandment "Thou shalt be non-judgmental" was made for him. Sex? Lies? Obstruction of justice? All together now: "Everybody does it." Don't give me that Monica stuff, we all know Chester Arthur spent every Friday afternoon at the Lake Champlain Maple Massage Parlour and that William McKinley was a phone-sex fiend who, even as he was getting updates on the Spanish–American War, was panting, "Hello, Central, put me through to 1-900-CHICKS-WITHOUT-BUSTLES." Everybody does it!

So now the everybody-does-it president thinks we need an everybody-does-it war on terrorism. Osama is on a par with the drunken bozo who yells "Beat it, faggot!" at the guy in the parking lot. "Terror has a long history." Everybody does it.

Old-fashioned pacifism is too weedy, and open anti-Americanism is too nasty, but, secure in its sense of its own virtue, non-judgmentalism is craftier and more lethal, and guaranteed, as Clinton's smug demeanor suggests, to confirm your own moral superiority. "The people who died represent, in my view, not only the best of America," he said, "but the best of the world that I worked hard for eight years to build." Ah, yes: King Bill's subjects enjoying the blessings of the peaceable kingdom he built for us. Clinton always took a somewhat royalist view of his job, sometimes explicitly so: There wasn't a single morning, he told us, that he didn't wake up thinking about how he could make life better for the American people. The founding principle of the Republic is that the American people make life better for *themselves*, but Clinton's neo-monarchical approach found many takers, from soccer moms to "seniors." You can understand why he finds Bush's modesty offensive: Compare the mountain of "I, I, I, I, I"s in Clinton's speech with those in his successor's in Atlanta a day later. For Bush, his cabinet colleagues aren't extras, the world's leaders aren't supporting players, and—most important—his fellow citizens aren't an audience.

In Afghanistan, let us note, the problem of the unseemly ex-president appears not to exist. King Zahir is still around and living in Rome, but for his various successors, their presidencies' expiry dates tend also to be their own. Zahir was deposed in 1973 by his cousin and brother-in-law Daoud, who was killed by his successor Taraki, who was suffocated by his successor Hafizullah Amin, who was executed by the Soviets, who installed Babrak Karmal, who died in a Moscow hospital but in a rare break with tradition managed to outlive his replacement, Najibullah, whom the Taliban wound up hanging from a traffic post. I wouldn't wish such a fate on our ex-president, but it seems to me that if Bill really wants to be monarch, he's younger and fitter than King Zahir. Let's install him on the throne in Kabul, and let him get back to working for the Afghan people. **NR**

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Hillary Clinton said there was a Vast Right-Wing Conspiracy out to get her (sort of) hubby. The Conspiracy didn't topple Billy boy, but it did gore Al — the cool dude who no doubt invented unisex restrooms — and prevent him from ascending to the presidency. Never underestimate the power of a conspiracy, or even a single conspirator! (Every vote counts, as you *now* know.)

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■ AT WAR ■

Rules for Diplomats . . .

. . . and when to break them

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

BISMARCK is supposed to have said that asking him to take political principles into account when conducting foreign policy was like suggesting that he walk through a dense forest with a twelve-foot pole between his teeth. Well, he *would* say that, wouldn't he? Still, even if we discount for the cynicism of a 19th-century practitioner of realpolitik, his observation cannot be dismissed. For when U.S. policy-makers turn to such places as Afghanistan and the Balkans, they bring with them a set of principles that often make them stumble.

Here are three such rules: You should not change borders; you should not propose a peaceful transfer of populations; and your solution—especially if it requires force—must have the approval of the U.N. Now, these are all useful ideas, provided that they are seen as cautionary—and optional—restraints. Changing borders is reasonably seen as dangerous because it might be a precedent encouraging expansionist states to seek the forcible breakup of vulnerable nations. Peaceful transfers of populations are disliked lest they encourage violent "ethnic cleansing." And U.N. sanction is required because diplomats generally want to place as many obstacles as possible in the way of force as a solution to disputes.

All of these are reasonable aims. But there may well be circumstances in which other solutions are preferable. For example, allowing Slovenia and Croatia to secede from Yugoslavia involved much less violence than would have resulted from an extended attempt to compel them to stay in the federation. The U.S. position—that we had no dog in that fight—effectively gave Milosevic permission to prevent their departure by force. He soon abandoned that effort, but the U.S. policy—largely dictated by a dislike of changing borders—was a grave error; by re-liberating the genie of political violence, it helped cause the Balkan wars of the 1990s.

Compare and contrast the "velvet divorce" of Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Against the expressed wishes of virtually every Western leader, all concerned to prevent the redrawing of boundaries, the two halves of Czechoslovakia broke apart peacefully and have since developed quite effectively as single states. There is no conflict between them such as might well have developed had significant numbers of Czechs and Slovaks felt imprisoned in a common state. And their recent history compares very favorably with the wars between nations forcibly constrained to stay in Yugoslavia. Yet despite these experiences, redrawing boundaries remains a bugbear to respectable diplomatic opinion.

■

The error committed by the diplomats is to confuse stability with unbending support of the status quo.

■

Let us now look at transferring population. Hostility to this is so fixed an element in international affairs that when the Dayton Accords were negotiated, one element in them was the return of Bosnian refugees forcibly ejected by ethnic cleansing. But very few refugees have in fact returned to the homes they left—and for good reason: They would be returning to live next door to the very people who drove them out. That would be prudent, indeed possible, only if they were offered more or less permanent protection by NATO. It is hard not to feel that a better solution would have been to compensate them for their loss of property and assist them to settle amid their new (and ethnically similar) neighbors.

What makes this unbending hostility to population transfers so hard to fathom is that the postwar order in Europe rests upon the violent expulsion of ethnic Germans from eastern Europe. Unjust though that it was, it created stable postwar borders that have minimized conflict ever since. And the decision of successive West German governments not to seek to reverse these expulsions, asking instead for reasonable compensation for their victims, has rightly been seen as a very considerable act of statesmanship.

And then there is the use of force without U.N. sanction. Suppose that a powerful state, say China, invades Freedonia. When the U.S. seeks a U.N. Security Council resolution to condemn and resist the invasion, China vetoes it. If the U.S. has made a prior decision to forswear force without the U.N.'s blessing, then Freedonia will be conquered and occupied. Unlawful force will have triumphed. If that is a bad thing, then the rules that helped bring it about are either foolish, or wicked, or (as I think) a reasonable guide in general but not invariably valid or binding. The U.S. should be very wary of attempts by its European allies to obtain American consent to this U.N. preeminence; when they are not dictated by soft-headed pacifism, these urgings reflect an envious desire to constrain America's "hegemonic" power.

Most of the above rules are dictated by an understandable desire to promote stability in international affairs. That has led some conservatives to mistakenly denounce "stability" as such. Anyone who seriously thinks stability a bad thing should be given a one-way ticket to Colombia. The actual error committed by the diplomats is to confuse stability with unbending support of the status quo. When a status quo is unavoidably dissolving, as Yugoslavia was in 1990, the correct response is to persuade the different parties to abjure violence as a means to a solution. If that can be achieved, then they will eventually be led by the facts on the ground to solutions that reflect the wishes of the local populations. And if those solutions include border changes or transfers of population, so be it.

Another concept has recently entered the diplomatic rulebook: the principle of multi-ethnicity. Baldly stated, this is the assertion that the only really legitimate state is one combining several ethnic groups. This proposition is the precise opposite of the principle of national self-determination that Woodrow Wilson asserted in 1918 as the only legitimate basis for statehood. In those days, the

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Habsburg Empire was a model of what to avoid; today it is a model to emulate. Anyone who visits the Balkans today in the company of U.N. officials soon becomes accustomed to hearing "the principle of multi-ethnicity" trip off their tongues. Nor is this mere theory: In the Dayton negotiations, great emphasis was placed on ensuring that Bosnia remained a multi-ethnic state; and in the Kosovo war, the demand of the Kosovar Albanians to form their own ethnic state was rejected—in part because it was seen as conflicting with the principle of multi-ethnicity.

One should, of course, distinguish the *principle* of multi-ethnicity from the *fact* of multi-ethnicity. No one needs to assert the principle when the fact flourishes—as it does, for instance, in New York City. The principle becomes important only when the fact is visibly and vitally lacking, as in Bosnia or Kosovo. A man can be murdered for speaking the wrong language in a Pristina street; but the U.N. authorities labor to ensure that the judiciary contains the percentages of Serb and Albanian appropriate to a multi-ethnic society. An ideological orthodoxy is being pursued, at the expense of commonsense solutions to pressing problems.

A faint echo of these concerns can be seen in the State Department's current concern that Kabul and Kandahar should not fall to the U.S.-led alliance until a government of all tribal factions has been put together. There is nothing unreasonable in seeking to reconcile the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan, the Pashtuns, to a new order by including them in the government; but it *is* unreasonable to insist that real military victories should be given up until the perfect diplomatic solution has been achieved. Nothing in life or war is certain; those victories may not be permanently available; and forswearing them may finally be self-defeating. After all, the Pashtuns are already the largest faction in the Taliban government. Common sense suggests it would be easier to recruit them for betrayal when their tribal colleagues have been defeated; victory drums up its own recruits. Only the *amour-propre* of diplomats will be hurt by a military victory; and that is presumably an occupational hazard, like housemaid's knee, which need wring no tears from the rest of us. **NR**

■ **AT WAR** ■

Screen Test

The fight over airport security

BYRON YORK

It seems odd to say, but the way John Mica sees it, the anthrax scare on Capitol Hill helped the Republican aviation-security bill pass the House. The GOP bill called for a new safety system in which the nation's 28,000 airport baggage screeners would be private contractors working under strict federal supervision—as opposed to the Senate bill, which called for all screeners to be federal employees. Mica, a Florida Republican who chairs the House aviation subcommittee, had carefully studied the issue but was having trouble getting his colleagues to take the time to learn why private was better. "We were losing the battle," he says, but then came the anthrax threat. "When members were forced out of their offices, with people on the House floor, we had a chance to sit down and discuss." The bill passed.

If only Mica and his allies had had the chance to make one-on-one presentations to the American people. Instead, the public saw GOP leaders who seemed determined to make the worst possible case for private baggage screeners. House majority leader Dick Armey, for example, sometimes seemed to spend less time discussing air security than flailing away at the opposition. "What the Democrats want is 30,000 new dues-paying contributors," Armey said on October 14, adding later that the Democratic plan was designed to create new members of "the federal union that happens also to be their most generous single contributor to their campaign."

Republicans working on the bill winced. "It was terrible," says one GOP aide. And it wasn't just that pronouncements like Armey's were bad PR, sending the message that Republicans cared more about making political points than about airport safety. They also obscured the fact that Mica, House Transportation Committee chairman Don Young, and others in the GOP were working hard to find the best policy on aviation security.

They read reports on the subject. They held open hearings. They held closed hearings (to discuss classified information). They met with a wide variety of experts. And as they listened and read, they came up with the plan that became their bill.

Contrary to much of what has been written about it in the press, the Republican plan doesn't call for a totally private screening force. Rather, it calls for private screeners working under intense federal supervision and constant testing. Maintaining that level of scrutiny will require lots of new federal workers—the supervisors and testers—so that some 25 percent of the "private" force will be government employees. But the bill doesn't mandate precisely how many, instead giving that authority to the president and the newly created undersecretary of transportation for security.

There's also been some misunderstanding about who those private contractors will work *for*. They now work for the airlines, who hired the lowest bidders without great concern for the quality of their work; under the House plan, they will be hired by the federal government—which means that the much-debated difference between the House and Senate proposals is between one bill that would make all screeners federal government employees and another bill that would make them private contractors working for the federal government.

The difference might seem small, but to many experts, it's important. House members and staff talked extensively to European and Israeli security officials and found that some countries had tried a fully federalized security force but found it unworkable. Many of those countries now use a public/private mix similar to what Republicans proposed in the House. "We just tried to pick the best of what everybody else had done and tried not to make the mistakes that both we and they had made," says Mica.

Beyond the commonsense realization that the most successful systems do not use a fully public-sector screening force, House Republicans believe there's another important reason the Senate

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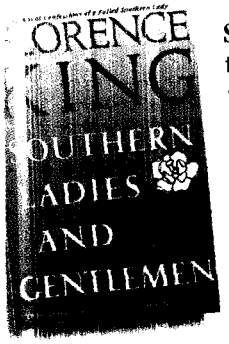

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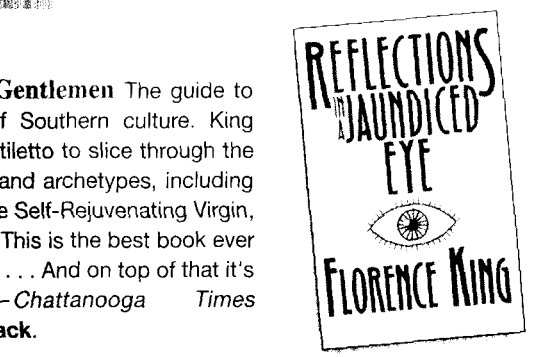

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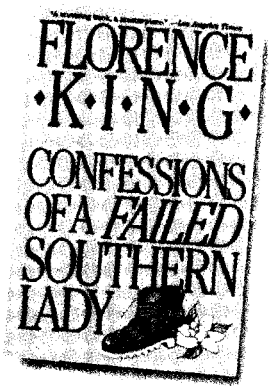

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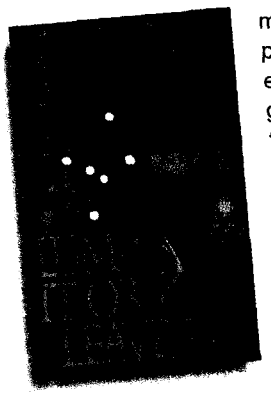

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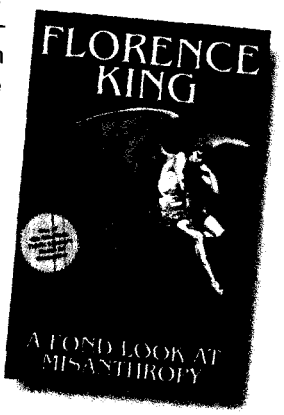

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all-federal plan would not be a good idea: The federal-employee system is simply too rigid to handle the job. "We always say we're going to add flexibility, but it just seems inherent that it takes a long time to hire them and is hard to fire them," says David Schaffer, counsel for the aviation subcommittee, who directed much of the GOP research. "The one thing that makes federal employment attractive to people is the security of it, that you can't be fired and you get a good retirement."

Indeed, a recent study by the Brookings Institution found that 66 percent of lower-level federal workers cited job security as the reason they chose to work for the government. Only 30 percent of federal employees said their organizations "do a very good or somewhat good job at disciplining poor performers," while 67 percent said they do not. That does not bode well for an aviation-security force in which poor performance would have to be quickly addressed.

■

The House didn't go for the quick fix or the easy soundbite, as the Senate had.

■

Furthermore, says Dorothy Robyn, a former Clinton White House staffer who now studies aviation issues for Brookings, baggage inspection "is rote, repetitive work . . . the kind of thing that government should be able to write a contract to have someone carry out. You can define it, you can evaluate it, and you can get rid of bad performers." Contrast that, Robyn says, to other jobs—like police work and military service—that can be handled only by the government. One could not, for example, write a contract to specify the precise duties of a police officer; the work is too varied and requires an enormous amount of discretion. But baggage screening, Robyn believes, can be handled best by contractors working under close supervision. She favors the House version of the bill because it gives the executive branch the option to do just that. "The choice is between a bill [the Senate's] that gives the federal government the responsibility but no flexibility and a bill that gives flexibility," she says.

House Republicans have been accused of wanting to keep the current, dangerously inadequate, low-bid private security system in place. But the House bill specifically calls for a well-paid screening force. A Congressional Budget Office study of the cost of the House bill assumes that screeners will be paid an average base salary of about $36,000 a year—the same assumption the CBO made for the Senate bill, and more than twice the screeners' current pay (about $15,000). Federal supervisors would make about $53,000. The bill also calls for well-paid law-enforcement officers to be present at every airport-security checkpoint in the country.

In addition, the House bill calls for more far-reaching changes in security than does the Senate version. The Senate bill was done hurriedly in the wake of September 11—lawmakers raced to pass it unanimously on the one-month anniversary of the attacks—and ignored several critical areas of air safety, like the need for full screening of checked baggage and greater security in non-public areas of airports. The House, taking more time, addressed those issues in a more comprehensive and thoughtful bill. "If we had passed the Senate bill, it would have had nice cosmetics," says John Mica. "But would it have addressed the problems we face with aviation security? Absolutely not."

Yet for their troubles, the House lawmakers were hit with charges that they didn't care about aviation security. On November 12, after the apparently accidental crash of an American Airlines jet in New York, House minority leader Richard Gephardt said he hoped the crash would motivate House Republicans to get "off their duff" and adopt the Senate measure. He accused majority whip Tom DeLay of selling out to the private security companies—and even wondered whether DeLay was "on the same planet as I'm on."

It was not what one might call a constructive contribution to the debate. But House Republicans—who take aviation security *very* seriously—pressed on. They didn't go for the quick fix or the easy soundbite, as the Senate and the Democrats in the House had. They just tried to do the right thing. **NR**

■ **AT WAR** ■

Sly Sy

A journalist's latest tricks

JOHN J. MILLER

"At *The New Yorker*, each article undergoes an extensive fact-checking process: Quotes are confirmed, details authenticated, the spellings of names verified, and so forth," write that magazine's editors in their November 12 issue. "This is well known." With jaw-dropping piety, they go on to note that their "grueling procedure" applies even to cartoons.

It is *The New Yorker*'s reputation for rigorous fact-checking that made a story appearing in the same issue such a sensation. Seymour M. "Sy" Hersh, one of America's most celebrated investigative journalists, reported stunning new information about the military's nighttime raid, on October 20, of Taliban leader Mullah Omar's compound in Afghanistan. Air Force Gen. Richard B. Myers, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, had said the mission "overall was successful." Hersh, however, labeled it "a near-disaster," and provided astonishing details: "Twelve Delta members were wounded, three of them seriously." It was the first time anybody in the public at large had heard this. Hersh's article was the talk of the Sunday news shows on November 4, before copies of *The New Yorker* had even hit the newsstands; he made a number of media appearances to explain his version of the events.

If Hersh's account is correct, it is deeply troubling. It not only conjures up images of botched special operations of the recent past, such as the Desert One mission in Iran (1980) and the "Black Hawk Down" catastrophe in Somalia (1993), but also suggests that the Pentagon won't provide basic facts about the war, even when doing so poses no reasonable threat to national security.

But if the claims coming out of the Pentagon deserve close scrutiny—and they do—then the same must go for

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Hersh's reporting. It turns out that key assertions in his article are very probably wrong, even as Hersh uses them to opine on the airwaves about how the war should be fought.

Hersh, of course, is no ordinary reporter. Over the past 30 years, he has won just about every journalism award there is, including the Pulitzer, which he took home for uncovering the My Lai massacre in Vietnam. His articles and books are full of revelations. In the first *New Yorker* piece he wrote after September 11, for instance, he reported that an unmanned aircraft had a clear shot to kill Mullah Omar on the first night of the bombing—but that a military lawyer forbade the attack.

This was disputed, just as virtually everything Hersh writes is disputed. It's become a ritual: Hersh publishes an eye-popping story, and then the complaints pour in. Sources say they weren't quoted properly. Others claim Hersh takes material out of context and ignores facts that don't comport with the point he wants to make. According to a *Vanity Fair* profile of Hersh, A. M. Rosenthal, the former executive editor of the *New York Times* (where Hersh worked in the 1970s), once heard him "practically blackmailing" a person he was supposed to be interviewing.

Hersh has admitted mistakes in the past. His 1991 book *The Samson Option*, which said the Israelis owned nuclear missiles, relied for much of its information on a man Hersh now admits "lies like people breathe." In an interview three years ago with *The Progressive*, Hersh said, "If the standard for being fired was being wrong on a story, I would have been fired long ago."

His methods came under severe criticism following the publication of his 1997 bestseller *The Dark Side of Camelot* and its negative portrayal of John F. Kennedy. While conducting his research, Hersh came across what looked like his biggest scoop since My Lai: a cache of unknown JFK documents offering apparent proof of an affair with Marilyn Monroe, among dozens of other tantalizing factoids. Hersh gained access to them through Lawrence X. Cusack, a man who claimed his father was a lawyer for Kennedy. The papers eventually were shown to be forgeries—Cusack is now in prison—but Hersh refused for months to disbelieve them, coming up with desperate rationalizations for skeptics who wondered why documents containing ZIP codes were dated before ZIP codes even existed. Hersh was so eager to get his hands on the papers, he wrote a letter to Cusack stating that he had "independently confirmed" the relationship between JFK and Cusack's father. This was a lie. "Here is where I absolutely misstated things," testified Hersh during Cusack's trial. Assistant U.S. attorney Paul A. Engelmayer accused Hersh of playing "a little fast and loose with the facts."

Ultimately Hersh stepped back from the brink. He tried to develop a tele-

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vision documentary about the JFK papers, and his partners were able to prove convincingly that they were fakes. The final version of his book did not cite them. But critics complained about the material he *did* use, because of its thin sourcing and its treatment of speculation as fact. "In his mad zeal to destroy Camelot, to raze it down, dance on the rubble, and sow salt on the ground where it stood, Hersh has with precision and method disassembled and obliterated his own career and reputation," wrote Garry Wills in *The New York Review of Books*. Conservatives enjoyed the controversy, because it involved liberals attacking each other and made JFK look bad. Yet Wills was essentially correct in his assessment.

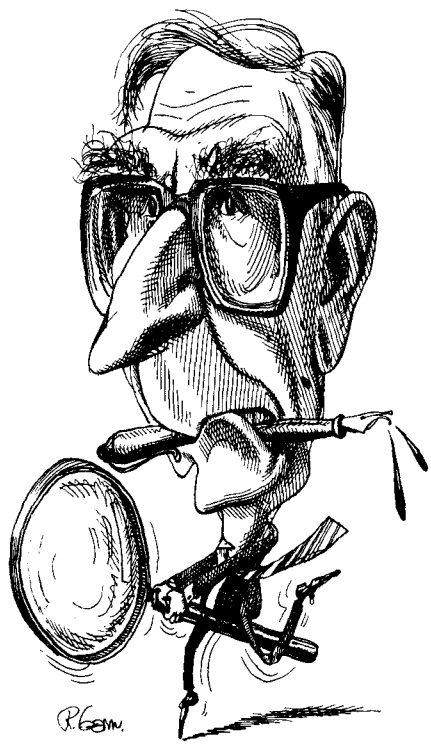
Hersh defended his interest in Kennedy's sex life. "I put in all the sex stuff because it goes right to his character, his recklessness, his notion of being above the law," he told the *New York Times*. Hersh did not apply this same standard to what he called the "Clinton sex crap." One year later—and a month before Bill Clinton's impeachment—he lambasted the press for "climbing into the gutter with the president and the Republican radicals . . . the same Republicans who say you can't have *Huckleberry Finn* in libraries." When he did criticize Clinton, it was always from the left, for "what he's done to welfare, what he's done to the working class, what he's done to habeas corpus."

Hersh saves his real ire for Republicans, accusing the GOP of having a racist foreign policy: "Ronald Reagan found it easy to go to Grenada, and Bush found it easy to go to Panama, to the Third World, or to people of a different hue. There seems to be some sort of general pattern here." The war in Afghanistan must only confirm these prejudices.

The latest *New Yorker* story quickly became the latest Hersh controversy. Top military officials have denied its primary claim of a disastrous mission that included serious casualties. "That's not true," said Gen. Myers on *Meet the Press*, when Tim Russert asked him about the article. "My belief is that every soldier that came back from that particular raid is back on duty today; none of them seriously injured, certainly none of them injured by the Taliban." Rear Adm. John Stufflebeem concurred: "The reports I have seen just don't support that article's supposition." Army Gen. Tommy Franks added, "We had a bunch of these young people who, you know, had scratches and bumps and knocks from rocks and all this sort of stuff. And so, it's—it's probably—it's probably accurate to say that maybe—maybe five or maybe 25 people were, quote, 'wounded.' We had no one wounded by enemy fire."

Clearly, somebody's not telling the truth. Perhaps the matter might have cleared up if Hersh had confronted the generals with his information before reporting it. This is Journalism 101—let everybody involved have a chance to comment—and yet Hersh chose to consider only one side of the story.

It is difficult to double-check Hersh's work because of its heavy reliance on anonymous sources. Perhaps in time the full truth of October 20 will come out. For now, though, there is a single assertion in Hersh's story whose truth can be independently assessed. Hersh writes: "The mission was initiated by sixteen AC-130 gunships, which poured thousands of rounds into the surrounding area but deliberately left the Mullah's house unscathed."



Seymour Hersh by Roman Genn

The Pentagon won't discuss operational details, but it's extremely unlikely that the mission involved 16 AC-130 planes. The Air Force has only 21 of them, and a number of these are set aside for training in Florida. More important is the fact that these big planes, full of firepower, don't fly in such large clusters. During the invasion of Panama in 1989, the Air Force used only seven of them at once. In the Gulf War, only a few were in the air at a time. Would 16 of them lead a relatively small special-forces operation in Afghanistan? "It makes zero sense," one Air Force officer told me.

When I asked Hersh about this apparent discrepancy, he was dismissive. "I wasn't there. Somebody could have misspoke. I could have misheard. It's possible there weren't 16," he said. "If I'm wrong, I'm wrong." He did admit that he had made an error during his November 5 interview on CNN, when he said the mission involved "sixteen helicopter gunships" rather than 16 AC-130s. "That time I did misspeak," he said.

Although *The New Yorker* says it assigned several fact-checkers to Hersh's article, it would seem that Hersh is once again playing fast and loose with the facts. And what does that say about his central claim of twelve men wounded, three of them seriously? "That's what my source told me," he says.

This is more than a simple matter of getting facts straight. Hersh has taken his contentions and used them as a basis for blasting the conduct of the war. "The operation was much too big. . . . It was noisy. It was slow," he said on his round of TV interviews. "Delta Force is so mad that they think—the language is that this time we lost twelve. Next time, if they do it again the same way, we're going to lose, you know, dozens. We can't operate that way."

The next time he seems to break a big story in *The New Yorker*, though, it's important to remember that General Hersh wasn't there—and also to recall a line from Evelyn Waugh's *Scoop*, in which an editor advises a war correspondent: "If there is no news, send rumors instead." **NR**

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Crusading They Went

The deeds and misdeeds of our spiritual kin

JOHN DERBYSHIRE

As a child I was given the stories of Alfred Duggan to read. Duggan, who lived from 1903 to 1964, was an English eccentric and playboy, a college acquaintance of Evelyn Waugh's. Through the 1950s and early 1960s he produced a stream of vivid historical novels, none of them, I think, set any later than the 13th century. One of my great favorites was *Knight with Armour*, in which Roger de Bodeham, landless second son of an obscure Anglo-Norman family, goes off with Robert of Normandy on the First Crusade. Roger makes it all the way to Jerusalem, taking part in the final, victorious assault on the city. While fighting on the walls, he suffers an unlucky stroke from an enemy's sword and falls to the street below, breaking his back.

> Dazed, sick and dying, he raised himself on his sound right arm and looked about him. To right and left the ramparts were black with pilgrims; someone had tied one end of a rope round a merlon, and was sliding down inside the city. He landed just beside Roger, waved his sword in the air, and uttered a great roar of "Ville Gagnée!" ["The city is won!"] Roger was scarcely conscious now, but that familiar triumphant cry raised a feeble echo in his mind; "Ville Gagnée," he groaned in answer, as his head fell forward and his spirit took flight.
>
> The pilgrimage was accomplished.

By Roman Genn

We have been hearing rather a lot about the Crusades recently. Our bearded adversary Osama bin Laden, in his taped speeches, never fails to warn the faithful that the Western world is intent on a new crusade, on breaking into "the abode of Islam," seizing Moslem lands and forcing our odious way of life on the pious adherents of the Prophet. In 1998, he dubbed his network of terrorist groups the "International Islamic Front for Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders," using "Crusaders" here as a synonym for "Christians." Even in the West, the word "crusade" dwells in the shadow of political incorrectness. George W. Bush's offhand remark on September 16 that "this crusade, this war on terrorism, is going to take a while" met with a storm of indignation, not all of it from Moslems. A stern editorial in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* reminded the president that the Crusades were "the equivalent of Christian jihads" and that "through centuries of bitter fighting, the word 'crusade' became freighted with intolerance and religious persecution." Bush promptly apologized for his use of the word, which has now been expunged from the White House vocabulary.

It is extraordinary that events of seven and eight hundred years ago should still excite passions. Were the Crusades really such a brazen assault on the integrity of the Moslem world? Or were they what the fictional Roger de Bodeham believed them to be: pilgrimages, in which brave men selflessly took it upon themselves to bring the holy places of Christianity back under Christian rule? If, as seems to be the case, we have to take some sort of position on the Crusades, what position should we take?

We can begin by noticing that Duggan killed off his hero at an opportune moment, just before the First Crusade got nasty. Having entered Jerusalem, the Crusaders sacked the city with terrible gusto. They killed every Moslem they found, man, woman, and child. The Jews were all burned alive in their synagogue, whence they had fled to escape the terror. (Crusaders generally did not distinguish between Jews and Moslems in Palestine.) When Raymond of Aguilers went to visit the Temple area the following morning he had to pick his way through corpses and blood that reached to his knees.

Even worse was to follow in the nearly 200 years of crusading in the Holy Land. During the assaults on Egypt after the fiasco of the Second Crusade, a Frankish army took the town of Tanis in the Nile delta and slaughtered its inhabitants—practically all of whom were Coptic Christians. And yet worse: In the Fourth Crusade a combined force of Franks and Venetians sacked Constantinople, the very seat of Eastern Christianity. They looted the Hagia Sophia cathedral of everything with value, and seated a French prostitute on the patriarch's throne to entertain them with ribald songs as

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they drank from the altar-vessels. A senator of Byzantium who witnessed the events thought that the city would have fared better if it had fallen to Saladin.

It would seem as though the Moslems, and also Christians of the Eastern confession, and even the guardians of political correctness, have a point in damning the Crusades as a blot on Western civilization. There are other charges brought against the Crusaders, too: Were they not mostly, like Roger de Bodeham, junior sons left landless by the custom of primogeniture, gone on Crusade to find a fief for themselves in the East? Was it not all, therefore, little more than an exercise in greed? Is there anything at all redeeming that can be said about these sorry episodes?

THE LARGE PICTURE

Well, yes. The massacres, though appalling, were not sensational in their time, and were matched by the Saracens at Antioch and Acre. Even before the First Crusade showed up, in fact, Palestine had been consumed by savage wars between the Turkish (and Sunni Moslem) Seljuks and the Arab (and Shi'ite Moslem) Fatimid dynasty, with massacres by both sides. Before that, the mad Fatimid caliph Al-Hakim, who ruled 996–1021, had wantonly persecuted both Jews and Christians, leveling the Church of the Resurrection in Jerusalem and even destroying the cave that was supposed to be the Holy Sepulchre itself.

■

If we look behind the cruelty, treachery, and folly of the Crusaders, we see the early flickering light of the modern West.

■

It must also be remembered that Palestine—and Syria, and Egypt, and North Africa, and Spain too—had long been Christian before the Moslem armies seized them in the 7th and 8th centuries, as Urban II pointed out when he preached the First Crusade. The Crusaders sought to recover by force one small part of what had been taken by force.

Nor do the accusations of land-greed stand up well under modern scholarship. In his recent book *A Concise History of the Crusades*, Thomas Madden refers to computer-aided analyses of documents relating to the men and women who took up the cross. Of those men of knightly rank, the vast majority were not spare sons, but lords of their estates. Says Madden: "It was not those with the least to lose who took up the cross, but rather those with the most." Alfred Duggan was wrong to assume that a typical Crusader would have been a second son. He was, however, right to make the last thought in Roger's mind: "The pilgrimage was accomplished." The Crusades were, above all, pilgrimages, with a much higher spiritual quotient than is commonly assumed. This was one reason that the Crusader kingdoms could not be sustained. In contrast with colonialists, who emigrate to stay, pilgrims, when their pilgrimage is accomplished, go back home, and that is what all too many of the Crusaders did. In fact, thirty years before the First Crusade, a huge pilgrimage of 7,000 Germans had made its way to the Holy Land without any intention of conquest. They had met with brutal mistreatment at the hands of the Fatimids. Gibbon says that only 2,000 returned safely.

Above and beyond this, if we are to take sides on the Crusades after all these centuries, we should acknowledge that, for all their many crimes, the Crusaders were our spiritual kin. I do not mean only in religion, though that of course is not a negligible connection: I mean in their understanding of society, and of the individual's place in it. Time and again, when you read the histories of this period, you are struck by sentences like these, which I have taken more or less at random from Sir Steven Runciman's *History of the Crusades*: "[Queen Melisande's] action was regarded as perfectly constitutional and was endorsed by the council." "Trial by peers was an essential feature of Frankish custom." "The King ranked with his tenant-in-chief as *primus inter pares*, their president but not their master."

If we look behind the cruelty, treachery, and folly, and try to divine what the Crusaders actually said and thought, we see, dimly but unmistakably, the early flickering light of the modern West, with its ideals of liberty, justice, and individual worth. Gibbon:

> The spirit of freedom, which pervades the feudal institutions, was felt in its strongest energy by the volunteers of the cross, who elected for their chief the most deserving of his peers. Amidst the slaves of Asia, unconscious of the lesson or example, a model of political liberty was introduced; and the laws of [the Frankish Kingdom of Jerusalem] are derived from the purest source of equality and justice. Of such laws, the first and indispensable condition is the assent of those whose obedience they require, and for whose benefit they are designed.

No sooner had Godfrey of Bouillon been elected supreme ruler of Jerusalem, eight days after the Crusader victory (he declined the title of "king," declaring that he would not wear a crown of gold in the place where Christ had worn a crown of thorns), than his first thought was to give the new state a constitution. This was duly done, and the Assize of Jerusalem—"a precious monument of feudal jurisprudence," Gibbon calls it—after being duly attested, was deposited in the Holy Sepulchre (which had been reconstructed some decades before).

That is what they were like, these men of western Europe. Brutish, coarse, ignorant, often insanely cruel—yes: but peer into their inner lives, their thoughts, their talk among themselves, so far as it is possible to do so, and what do we find? What were their notions, their obsessions? Faith, of course, and honor, and then: vassalage, homage, fealty, allegiance, duties and obligations, genealogies and inheritances, councils and "parlements," rights and liberties. The feudal order is easy to underestimate. In part this is because feudal society was so at odds with many modern ideals—the ideal of human equality, for example. In part, also, I believe, because the sheer complexity of it, and of its laws and customs, deters study and sometimes confounds analysis. (Define and differentiate the following: champerty, maintenance, embracery.) A certain dogged application is required to get to grips with

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feudal society, and few who are not professional historians are up to the task, Karl Marx being one honorable exception. Yet it is in this knotty tangle of heartfelt abstractions spelled out in Old French that can be found, in embryo, so much of what we cherish in our own civilization today.

OTHER PLAYERS

None of the other players in the great drama of the Crusades had anything like this to show. The Fatimids were a degraded and lawless despotism, in which none but the despot had any rights at all. The aforementioned caliph Al-Hakim, for example, took to working at night and sleeping in the daytime. Having embraced this habit, he then imposed it on his subjects, forbidding anyone in his dominions, on pain of death, from working during daylight hours. He also, to enforce the absolute confinement of women, banned the making of women's shoes. (Thirteenth-century Moslems were just as shocked by the freedom and equality of Western women as fundamentalist Moslems today are.) The Seljuk Turks, who held Jerusalem from 1078 to 1098, were very little better. They still retained some of the vigor and independence of their nomadic origins, and the rough honor code of the steppe, but of debate and compromise they had only the sketchiest notions. Of the separation of spiritual and secular jurisdictions, they had no notion at all, any more than any other Moslem had. This latter point, so crucial in the development of medieval European society, was also lost on the Byzantines, whose ruler was stuck in the late-Roman style of "Pontiff-Emperor," the font of ecclesiastical as well as of temporal authority.

Man for man, there is little to choose between the Crusaders and the Saracens. Saladin, for example, was a true natural gentleman: courteous, chivalrous, brave, and pious. When his mortal enemy Richard Lionheart was lying sick of a fever in August of 1192, Saladin had him sent peaches and pears, and snow from Mount Hermon to cool his drinks. Contrariwise, the crusader Reynald of Châtillon was a thuggish sociopath, no better than a brigand. (Saladin had the pleasure of decapitating him personally.) Yet the virtues of men like Saladin rose as lone pillars from a level plain. They were not, as the occasional virtues of the Crusaders were, the peaks of a mountain range. The Saracens had, in a sense, no society, no polity. Says the Marquis to the Templar in another great Crusader novel, Sir Walter Scott's *The Talisman*: "I will confess to you I have caught some attachment to the Eastern form of government: A pure and simple monarchy should consist but of king and subjects. Such is the simple and primitive structure—a shepherd and his flock. All this internal chain of feudal dependence is artificial and sophisticated." Well, artificial and sophisticated it may have been, but in its interstices grew liberty, law, and the modern conscience.

If we are to have the Crusades thrown at us by the likes of Osama bin Laden, let us at least not abjure them. It is true that we can barely recognize anything of ourselves in the Crusaders. They were coarse and unwashed. Most of them were illiterate. Of the physical world, they were ignorant beyond our imagining, believing the earth to be flat and the sky a crystal dome. Such medicine as they had was far more likely to kill than to heal—Richard Lionheart and Amalric, sixth king of Jerusalem, were both killed by the ministrations of their surgeons. Their honor was often truculent, their loyalty sometimes fickle, their piety was barnacled with the grossest kinds of superstition. We turn in disgust from the spectacle of them wading through blood to the Holy Sepulchre of Christ, and wonder if we would not have found their enemies—the silk-clad viziers of Islam, or the suave, scented courtiers of Constantinople—more to our liking. Well, perhaps we would; but let us at least acknowledge that these rough soldiers carried with them to the East the germ-seeds of modern civil society. Palestine proved to be stony ground: but that is the East's loss, as the eventual flowering of those seeds elsewhere was all of humanity's immeasurable gain. In spirit and in values, though at an immense distance, the Crusaders were our kin. While not forgetting their many transgressions, we should weep for what they lost and remember with pride their few astonishing victories. *Ville gagnée!* **NR**

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Martyred

Muslim murder and mayhem against Christians

KATE O'BEIRNE

PRESIDENT BUSH'S repeated assertions about the peaceful nature of Islam were briefly interrupted when the State Department issued the annual report required by the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998. This year, as in the past, our Muslim-world partners in the coalition against terrorism were prominently featured among the most violent, most intolerant regimes in the world. Religious minorities are persecuted in over 20 states where Islam is the official or dominant religion. The million Christians who have fled the Muslim world in the past five years were hardly seeking sanctuary from the peaceful face of Islam.

With shocking regularity, human-rights groups report the death of Christians at the hands of Muslim militants in Africa, South Asia, and the Middle East. In Pakistan, Islam has been the official religion since 1973, and over the years, the State Department has urged our ally to repeal section 295(c) of the penal code. This is the section that stipulates the death penalty or life in prison for blaspheming Mohammed, and the State Department notes that it "contributes to inter-religious tension, intimidation, fear, and violence." A Christian Pakistani, Ayub Masih, was jailed five years ago on a blasphemy charge, and he has now filed his final appeal against the death sentence imposed on him. Masih is alleged to have said, "If you want to know the truth about Islam, read Salman Rushdie." An accusation by a Muslim neighbor was enough to secure the blasphemy conviction. Under Pakistan's "Hudood ordinances," the legal testimony of religious minorities is accorded half the weight of Muslims'. The testimony of a non-Muslim woman is halved again.

Agence France Presse

Victims in Bahawalpur

Most recently, gunmen from the "Army of Omar" opened fire on a Protestant congregation worshipping at St. Dominic's Catholic Church in Bahawalpur, killing at least 16. Islamic-party leaders in Pakistan immediately claimed that the massacre was a conspiracy to defame Muslims.

Then, Saudi Arabia. In a bracing departure from diplospeak, the State Department says, "Freedom of religion does not exist in Saudi Arabia." For many years, Christians have been flogged, imprisoned, and executed by a Saudi government that prohibits non-Muslim worship even in private homes. A Muslim who converts to another religion is subject to the death penalty by beheading.

Nigeria is another nightmare. The Center for Religious Freedom, part of Freedom House, maintains a "New Martyrs List," to call attention to the most horrific cases. In one bloody week in May 2000, over 200 people were killed in Kaduna. Among the dead was Rev. Clement Ozi Bello, a 26-year-old former Muslim who had recently been ordained a Catholic priest. The young priest was attacked by a mob that dragged him from his car, tied him up, and gouged out his eyes, before leaving him dead on the side of the road.

In October, churches and Christian-owned shops were gasoline-bombed in an area of Kaduna now adorned with pictures of Osama bin Laden. More than 6,000 people have died in religious conflicts in Nigeria since the end of military rule two years ago. "Our people are being shot, butchered, and roasted," says Kaduna bishop Josiah Fearon.

The anti-Christian violence in Nigeria has been the direct result of the adoption of Sharia law, the strict Islamic code, by ten of the country's largely Muslim states in the north. Under Sharia, certain crimes are punishable by flogging, amputation, and beheading. The governor of one of these states dismisses the national constitution that proclaims Nigeria a secular country. "To be good Muslims," Ahmed Sani says, "we have to have Sharia to govern our lives, because God has told us that any Muslim who does not accept Sharia is not a good believer." Sani dispatched local officials to Saudi Arabia and Sudan to learn some more about the application of Sharia.

In Algeria, the military assumed power a decade ago, to prevent the Islamic Salvation Front from imposing Sharia on the country. Since then, Algeria has been engaged in bloody civil war. In 1994, the Armed Islamic Group pledged to eliminate Jews and Christians from Algeria. The group is deadly serious, having massacred thousands and even hijacking an Air France plane.

In the Philippines, an organization called Abu Sayyaf, with ties to al-Qaeda, wants to form an independent Islamic state in the southern islands. In May 2000, a Filipino Catholic priest was murdered along with four others among the 27 hostages kidnapped from two Catholic schools. Before being killed, Rev. Rhoel Gallardo was tortured for refusing to wear Muslim clothing and say Muslim prayers. During negotiations for the hostages' release, Abu Sayyaf demanded that all crosses be removed from churches.

Egypt, where the influence of Sharia law is growing, is home to the largest Christian community in the Middle East. The Coptic Orthodox are the targets of both militant Islamic groups and local security forces. Young Christian women are pressured to convert to Islam, while converts from Islam to Christianity have been tortured and imprisoned. Over the past 20 years, more than 30 massacres of Coptic Christians have occurred. In January 2000, during several days of rioting by Muslim mobs in Al-Kosheh, more than 100 homes and shops were destroyed, and 21 Christians and one Muslim

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killed. The Center for Religious Freedom says that the Egyptian government covered up these crimes to avoid the "politically sensitive" issue of punishing Muslims for murdering Christians.

Eventually 96 people were tried for the massacres in Al-Kosheh. The only four Muslims to be convicted were held responsible for the accidental killing of the Muslim. The longest sentence is being served by a *Christian*, Surial Gayed Isshak, for allegedly "publicly insulting Islam." Amnesty International has declared Isshak a "prisoner of conscience" and called for his release.

In Sudan, the Islamic government is carrying out genocide against the Christian population in the south. Secretary of State Powell has labeled Sudan "the biggest single abuser of human rights on earth." Two million people have died since 1983 in a civil war that ignited when the Khartoum government tried to impose Sharia on non-Muslims. Christians are slaughtered from the air by bombers, enslaved on the ground, and forced to convert to Islam or starve. Writing in the Winter 2001 issue of *The Middle East Quarterly*, Prof. Hilal Khashan of the American University of Beirut explains that Khartoum's rulers believe that non-Muslims in the south are their "lost brothers" who must be redeemed by Islam. According to Khashan, "This attitude reflects the fact that Muslims, devout or otherwise, tend to believe that Islam, the ultimate divine truth, is destined to prevail at the expense of other religions."

From reports by government and human-rights groups, a pattern clearly emerges: Predominantly Christian countries generally respect religious freedom, as do Buddhist countries (absent Communist domination). The Center for Religious Freedom concludes, "The religious areas with the largest current restrictions on religious freedom are countries with an Islamic background. This parallels problems with democracy and civil liberties in general, but the negative trend is stronger with respect to religion."

Hilal Khashan points out that religion has been a decisive factor in most civil wars in Arabic-speaking countries, and there have been at least a million deaths (compared with 150,000 Arab deaths in combined Arab–Israeli wars since 1948). The murderous intentions of the extremist Muslims have clearly overwhelmed the influence of the pacific practitioners continually cited by President Bush. Journalist Amir Taheri noted in the *Wall Street Journal* recently that 28 of the 30 active conflicts in the world involve Muslim governments or communities.

In his oft-cited book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Samuel P. Huntington writes, "Wherever one looks along the perimeter of Islam, Muslims have problems living peaceably with their neighbors. . . . Muslims make up about one-fifth of the world's population but in the 1990s they have been far more involved in intergroup violence than the people of any other civilization." Huntington further argues that Islamic militancy is not a heretical strain of Islam. "The underlying problem for the West is not Islamic fundamentalism. It is Islam, a different civilization whose people are convinced of the superiority of their culture and are obsessed with the inferiority of their power."

■

In Egypt, the only Muslims to be convicted were held responsible for the accidental killing of a Muslim.

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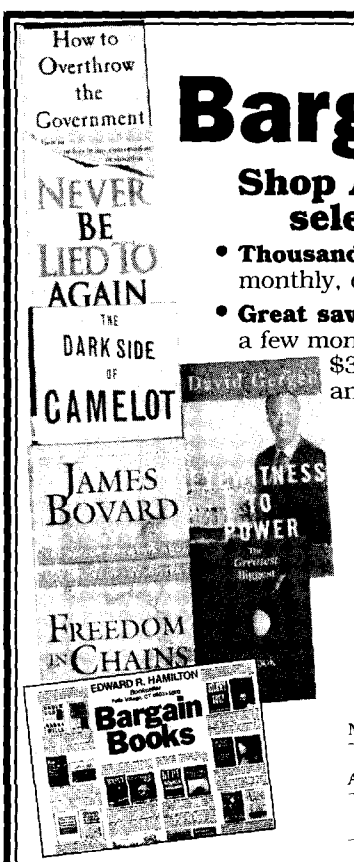
While scholars of the Koran debate whether or not its teachings justify violent jihads against non-believers, Christians in dozens of Muslim countries live with the fearful reality that they risk martyrdom at the hands of Islam—as they long have. Again, Huntington (writing in 1996): "Some Westerners, including President Bill Clinton, have argued that the West does not have problems with Islam but only with violent Islamist extremists. Fourteen hundred years of history demonstrate otherwise." **NR**



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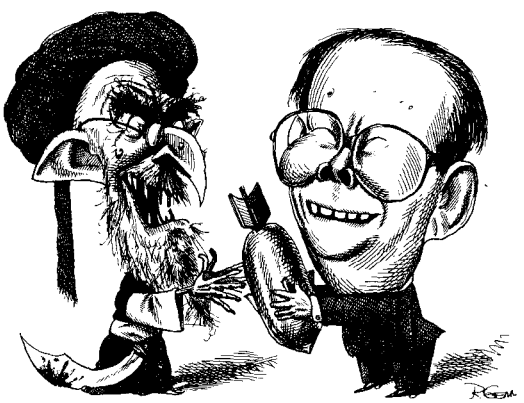
Delay or Die?

The imperative of counter-proliferation

RICHARD LOWRY

In 1946, U.S. delegate to the U.N. Bernard Baruch had an idea. All nations would be prohibited not just from seeking to develop nuclear weapons, but from building nuclear power plants that might create fissionable material appropriate for a bomb. Instead, an international authority would maintain a monopoly over nuclear activity, and the U.S. would eventually relinquish its weapons. U.N. Security Council permanent members would lose their veto over any action to enforce these restrictions, because, when it comes to nukes, "to delay may be to die."

Today, with worries about Osama bin Laden or other terrorists gaining access to the tens of thousands of nuclear weapons and the thousands of tons of fissionable material rattling around the world, Baruch's urgency may again seem appropriate. But his prescriptions don't, even as the spirit of them lives on in U.S. policy. The Baruch plan went nowhere in the U.N., but it still can be seen as a sort of high-water mark for post-war arms control. Then, the fantasy of non-proliferation at least still seemed shiny and new. It has been steadily discredited ever since.



Jiang Zemin supplies, by Roman Genn

The Baruch plan was the first shot in what would become an ever more tolerant and open-minded attitude to non-proliferation, pioneered by the Eisenhower administration, enshrined in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and finally brought to its appalling nadir by the Clinton administration. In the Age of Osama, it is time to acknowledge that non-proliferation is mostly a failure. It has restrained some nations—Japan, Ukraine, etc.—from acquiring nuclear weapons, but the overriding lesson of the last half-century is that weapons technology will always get through: through to the state that is willing to lie, cheat, and pay enough to get it.

The U.S. should now adopt a tougher, more clear-eyed approach to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and missile technology. It should concentrate less on the universalist goal of bringing all states under sweeping arms-control plans on an equal basis, and focus instead on a frankly discriminatory objective: denying weapons to the states—most of them Islamic—that are hostile to the West. This would be more practical than the grander efforts of the past, but it too would be doomed, eventually, to failure (although mere delay has its value). When rogue governments succeed in acquiring these weapons, the U.S. will have to punish or topple them, on the theory that the act of proliferation can't be eliminated but occasionally noxious governments can.

There should be no illusion about what is at stake in the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The U.S. should oppose it not because these weapons are inherently evil or because we seriously seek a nuclear-free world, but rather because their spread represents a diminution of Western power. As Samuel Huntington puts it in *The Clash of Civilizations*, "The proliferation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction is a central phenomenon of the slow but ineluctable diffusion of power in a multicivilizational world."

In fact, much of it has occurred with anti-Westernism as its implicit rationale, as China in particular seeks to undercut American dominance. "Weapons proliferation is where the Confucian-Islamic connection has been most extensive and most concrete, with China playing the central role in the transfer of both conventional and nonconventional weapons to many Muslim states," Huntington writes. China and Russia have been the suppliers, with Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, and North Korea—all terrorist states to one degree or another—the primary recipients. The Pakistani nuclear program, for instance, is almost entirely a Chinese production. And the Russians have been playing the same role for Iran.

HISTORY OF A FANTASY

Western naïveté has, over the years, helped push proliferation along, as Henry Sokolski argues in his book *Best of Intentions*. Eisenhower's Atoms for Peace program spread nuclear reactors around the globe "to serve the peaceful pursuits of mankind," with little thought to the possibility that they might serve the war-making pursuits as well. The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) of 1968, which sought to maintain the exclusivity of the nuclear club, is similarly starry-eyed. It talks of "the inalienable right" of signatories to develop nuclear technology, and urges "the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials, and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy." Cheating? Don't be silly. Sokolski quotes a Dutch NPT negotiator explaining that for parties to the treaty there should be "a clear presumption" that nuclear material and know-how won't be diverted to weapons programs.

This remarkable faith in the trustworthiness of every NPT nation is why signing the treaty was Iraq's first step toward acquiring a bomb. According to Khidhir Hamza, an Iraqi scientist who defected, Iraq used the presumption of innocence to acquire the hardware and knowledge for its massive nuclear program, with the International Atomic Energy Agency lending a hand. Hamza writes: "Few of Iraq's suppliers—or the IAEA itself—ever bothered to ask a simple question: Why would Iraq, with the second-largest oil reserves in the world, want to generate electricity by burning uranium?"

IAEA inspectors were easily deceived and manipulated, partly because any particularly aggressive inspector would

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simply not be invited back. Not just the NPT, but most arms-control agreements—the chemical and biological weapons conventions, for example—rely on inspecting the uninspectable. As Kathleen C. Bailey writes in a paper on bioterrorism for the National Institute for Public Policy, "Biological weapons facilities can be small, temporary, and without distinguishing features; there is no current means to detect a clandestine biological weapons production capability, absent serendipitous discovery." This is the problem with inspections generally: They can be guaranteed success only in the case of a nation not bent on frustrating them.

This circularity applies to arms-control agreements more broadly: They work so long as no one wants to violate them, in which case they simply don't work. The danger is forgetting this, and mistaking the sentiments and assurances that come with signing an agreement—which are so comforting and high-minded—with reality. This was a mistake that the Clinton administration inflated almost to a strategic doctrine: Don't verify, if you can trust instead.

Non-proliferation agreements are most effective when they are composed of like-minded nations determined to deny technology to a specific enemy, e.g., the Coordinating Committee (CoCom) of Western nations that sought to keep advanced military technology from the Warsaw Pact. The Clinton administration instead wanted to transform such organizations from, as Sokolski puts it, "like-minded discriminatory organizations to norm-based efforts that increased members' access to technology"—in other words, it sought to include the proliferators in the agreements in the hopes that it would somehow reform them.

So, instead of cracking down on Moscow's missile proliferation, for instance, the administration made Russia part of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), even as the Russians were flouting its terms. The EU wanted the Russians in so that they could be a permitted market for European aerospace sales, while the administration argued that their membership would modify their behavior. When Moscow's behavior was resolutely unmodified—it continued to proliferate to Iran and Iraq—the administration rewarded the Russians with various contracts and subsidies anyway.

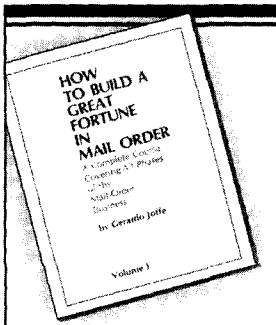
Meanwhile, at the administration's urging, China bulked up on treaties and agreements. It signed the NPT, the Chemical Weapons Convention, and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and it (sort of) joined the MTCR. All these Good Housekeeping seals made it easier for China to acquire Western weapons technology, harder to punish it for any transgressions. And did nothing to stop its proliferating. As an important 1998 Senate report, "The Proliferation Primer," put it, Beijing still managed to be "the principal supplier of weapons of mass destruction and missile technology to the world."

As with Russia, the Clinton administration not only failed to punish the Chinese for their violations, it often rewarded them. After Beijing sold anti-ship missiles to Iran, Sokolski writes, the White House approved "hundreds of millions worth of sensitive U.S. missile-related exports to the very Chinese firms known to be proliferating missiles." Such was the pattern.

Russia and China—even if the Clinton administration mishandled them—are at least major states susceptible to U.S. influence. Now, thanks partly to their handiwork, proliferation is so far advanced that an isolated basket case like North Korea has graduated from weapons consumer to weapons supplier. The North Korean *No Dong* missile has become, as a result of Pyongyang's salesmanship, the missile of choice in the Third World. The Pakistani *Ghauri* and the Iranian *Shahab-3* are both really *No Dongs*. Iran, in turn, has been able to market missile technology acquired from North Korea to Syria, as the daisy chain moves from rogue to rogue.

WHAT CAN BE DONE

Despite this dismaying picture, the U.S. must still do all it can at least to slow proliferation. Instead of ambitious global agreements and conventions, the U.S. should seek to create a CoCom-style regime focused on stopping proliferation to the bloc of nations that are most likely to use or threaten to



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use a weapon against the West or leak one to a terrorist: Iraq, Iran, Sudan, Libya, North Korea, and even our rent-an-ally Pakistan. One reason the success of the CoCom wasn't duplicated after the Cold War was that there was no agreement on who the enemy was; now there should be.

The effort should spread in concentric rings, beginning with tough export controls here in the U.S. No one—not businessmen, not politicians, not our allies—likes export controls, since they necessarily mean forgoing cash: but some things are just more important. The argument against controls is often that the technology in question is available elsewhere, so why not have American-supplied Libyan poison-gas plants rather than German? But we should lead by showing our own willingness to spurn certain profits. Meanwhile, European allies like Germany and France need to be convinced that joining the war on terrorism means recognizing that some export markets simply aren't worth having. Finally, we should urge nations that are loitering on the outskirts of the civilized world to choose up sides. Russia may choose the right way, China probably won't.

But there are limits to what can be done to stop the spread of weapons technology. Non-proliferators are in the position of anti-drug warriors, constantly involved in a futile effort to keep supply from meeting demand. *It inevitably will.* Then what? When supply-side non-proliferation fails, demand-side counter-proliferation should fill the breach. The best way to end demand for weapons of mass destruction is to seek the end—through diplomatic, economic, and military means—of the governments that want them. Iraq should be the easiest case. After years of flouting U.N. resolutions and international inspections, after stockpiling tons of chemical and biological agents and seeking a nuclear bomb, Saddam's regime should be made into a demonstration of the consequences of seeking weapons of mass destruction: It should be destroyed.

This would have an important educational effect. The reason governments seek weapons of mass destruction is that they know these weapons will increase their power. If they are shown that the pursuit of these weapons could also *end* their power, they might alter their calculations. In this light, aiding the Iranian opposition is a more important act of non-proliferation than getting President Khatami's signature on some agreement. In a similar way, missile defense can change the cost-benefit equation of acquiring missile technology by undermining the utility of ballistic missiles. So, this supposedly dangerously "unilateral" initiative—American missile defense—buttresses the cause of non-proliferation. Other unilateral actions, such as preemptive strikes on the model of Israel's take-out of an Iraqi reactor in 1981, or covert operations to sabotage technology shipments, can also repress proliferation in a way that gaudy treaties cannot.

None of this will be easy. It will require Western self-confidence, moral clarity, and, above all, military superiority. The cause of keeping our enemies from attaining weapons is achievable only with lots of weapons of our own: an enormous conventional military superiority, a credible nuclear deterrent, and—as a fail-safe—missile defense. But adopting this more muscular, realistic approach to non-proliferation is as urgent as the other kind seemed in 1946. In the words of Bernard Baruch, "to delay may be to die." **NR**

Germs Against Man

Bioterror: a brief history

ANTHONY DANIELS

WHEN, in 1980, the World Health Organization announced the eradication of smallpox as a disease, the plot of a thriller came to me in an instant.

It was set a few years later, when mankind's herd immunity to smallpox had declined and much of the population had never been immunized against the disease. A highly intelligent Muslim fanatic, disguising his true beliefs, trains as a virologist, and gains entry into one of the two laboratories in the world still to hold stocks of the smallpox virus. He steals the virus with the intention of converting the world to Islam by the threat of starting an epidemic, his organization having destroyed simultaneously the small number of regional laboratories in which the world's stocks of vaccine are held, as well as the laboratories capable of producing the vaccine.

After the destruction of these stocks, the fanatic's organization demonstrates the reality of the threat in a small country (let us call it, for the sake of argument, Switzerland). He then threatens that, unless hundreds of thousands turn to Mecca at a certain time and date, he will release the virus into New York, Washington, London, and Paris.

The CIA manages to capture him, but cannot persuade him to withdraw his threat, which his minions will carry out unless he tells them not to. An agent has the idea of fixing a tiny loudspeaker in his ear while he is asleep, down which is played the voice of Allah—speaking, of course, in classical Arabic—telling him to desist. There is thus a happy ending.

I never wrote the book. And although I harbored inchoate doubts about the hubris of having declared a viral disease defeated once and for all, the plot of the thriller that entered my head was conceived more as a pleasantly frightening entertainment for bored airline passengers than as genuine prophecy. I didn't think I'd live to see the day when—as happened recently—the value of the shares in a company local to where I live doubled overnight because it received orders for millions of doses of smallpox vaccine. Biological warfare was essentially a bogey, like the witches in the fairy tales of my childhood: frightening to contemplate but known ultimately to be unreal.

This is strange, because biological warfare has been with us a long time. The ancients poisoned the wells of their enemies with the bodies of those who had died of epidemic disease as a matter of course. One account of the beginning of the Black Death in Europe—which ultimately killed up to a third of the population—is that it started with an act of biological

Mr. Daniels is a doctor, novelist, and journalist in England. Among his books is *Utopias Elsewhere*.

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warfare. The Tartars were besieging the Genoan trading outpost of Caffa (now Feodosia) on the Crimean coast in 1346, when plague broke out among them. Turning a catastrophic epidemic disease into a weapon, the Tartars lobbed their dead by means of catapults over the walls, and the Genoans, soon plagued by plague, took to their ships and returned to Genoa: from whence the Black Death soon engulfed the whole of Europe.

Of course, there are reasons to doubt whether, in the long run, the Tartars' attempt at biological warfare made much difference. The plague had already spread across Asia from China, and would have spread to Europe in any case: but what is not in doubt is that this is the kind of thing our ancestors did, without much of a qualm.

The British used blankets to spread smallpox among the Indians of their North American colonies, knowing that the victims were highly susceptible to a disease against which they had no natural resistance. In 1763, Sir Jeffrey Amherst, commander of the British Army, wrote to Colonel Henry Bouquet, stationed on the Ohio frontier, that "you will do well to try to [infect] the Indians by means of blankets as well as to try every other method that can serve to extirpate this execrable race." Smallpox had been an unwitting instrument of the Spanish conquest of America, too. The epidemic raged in the Incan Empire, for example, weakening it drastically shortly before the arrival of Pizarro. The Spanish were well aware of the relationship between epidemic disease and their conquest, though as far as is known they never deliberately spread disease as an instrument of war.

Until the germ theory of disease—and the acquisition of precise knowledge of microbiological organisms—the possibilities of biological warfare were necessarily limited. Once man had eaten of the culture of the petri dish of knowledge, however, it soon became clear that the prospect before him was not only that of disease eradication but of disease dissemination. Ineffectual clauses against the deliberate spread of epidemics were added to the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907, but in the First World War came the first belligerent use of the new bacteriological knowledge, when the Germans tried to infect Romanian sheep, destined for export to Russia, with anthrax. The French likewise tried to infect German horses with glanders; but biological weapons played a very small part in the war compared to chemical weapons.

TREATIES IGNORED

After the war, the League of Nations in Geneva tried to limit the potential use of biological weapons. The agreed protocol, signed by 40 nations, contained no means of verification, and most countries regarded it as morally binding only if they were fighting countries that had themselves signed the protocol. They felt able to continue research into biological

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weapons for use against non-signatory nations; and since this in practice meant that everything continued as if there were no protocol at all, the Geneva agreement was virtually useless.

One of the signatories, Japan, developed the largest-scale and most hideous biological-warfare programs in history. The best known of the Japanese bacteriological war criminals, Shiro Ishii, used the fact that the League of Nations had attempted to outlaw the use of biological weapons as an argument with his superior to demonstrate their potential. Why would the world body have attempted to outlaw them unless they were potentially extremely destructive? Relatively cheap to produce, they would sow death, havoc, and despair in equal measure among the enemy. Ishii would have seen eye to eye with Saddam Hussein.

■

Post-war attempts to control the spread of biological weapons have not been entirely successful, because man is not a trustworthy animal.

■

The Japanese constructed several huge facilities in the puppet state of Manchuria and other parts of occupied China, not only for the mass production of pathogens such as anthrax, typhoid, and plague bacilli, but for human experimentation as well. Disguised under names like the Anti-Epidemic Water Supply Unit, these facilities became charnel houses, where up to 30,000 people died. At the most notorious of them, Ping Fan, the human subjects (some of whom were dissected by pathologists before they died of whatever pathogen they had been subjected to) were known as *maruta*, that is to say, logs, because the authorities put it about while it was being built that the immense site was to be a lumber factory.

Some of the experiments carried out would have been comical had they not had such murderous intent and, in many cases, effect. Fountain pens were filled with bacteria. Chocolates with anthrax filling were handed out to local children. Flea bombs were developed that released billions of plague-carrying fleas when they exploded (they were not a great success, though, as the impact and the heat of the explosion rendered the fleas sluggish). Men were tied to the stake on open ground and subjected to shrapnel bearing the bacilli of gas gangrene, to see whether the disease could be spread in this way. The men died all right, but whether of shrapnel wounds or of gas gangrene is not recorded. While some of the experiments yielded knowledge of a deeply perverse type, others had the scientific value of picking the legs and wings off flies to see whether they could move afterwards.

The Japanese soon learned that biological weapons, at least on a mass scale, are hazardous to those who use them. They infected the wells and rivers of China with typhoid, but at least 1,700 of their own soldiers soon died of the disease. In battlefield conditions, it is difficult to confine the harmful effects to the enemy.

The Japanese knew all along that what they did—justified initially by their belief in their own superiority and destiny to rule the world—was beyond the pale of civilized conduct, for they destroyed the facilities utterly, and likewise most of the records, when defeat was imminent. The destruction was, as with Auschwitz, an admission of guilt. In doing so, however, they released plague-infected rats into the countryside, and for several years afterward there were epidemics of plague where the factories of death had been.

Post-war attempts to control the spread of biological weapons have not been entirely successful, because man is not a trustworthy animal. After pledging in 1972 not to engage in the production of biological weaponry, the Soviet Union proceeded to violate this pledge over the next two decades: Indeed, it expanded its efforts greatly, among other things engineering types of anthrax resistant to antibiotics. In the circumstances, one cannot help wondering whether agreements to "share information," which are said to build trust, are quite what is needed. Sharing bacteriological information often makes matters worse, as it increases the risk that dangerous tools will fall into the hands of the unscrupulous. Transparency is the panacea of the naïve: In reality, an ounce of intelligence is worth a bucketful of trust.

As for terrorism conducted with biological weapons, H. G. Wells predicted it in 1895, in a story called "The Stolen Bacillus," in which an anarchist tries to steal a culture of cholera to infect London's water supply. In 1915, a German resident in Washington, D.C., Dr. Dilger, secretly infected horses, mules, and cows being shipped to the Allies with anthrax produced in his own house. He succeeded in infecting several hundred military personnel in the process. In 1984, members of the Rajneesh cult in Oregon deliberately infected salad with typhoid germs, and 750 people were affected. In 1990, the sect known as Aum Shinri Kyo (Supreme Truth) attempted to spray the Japanese Diet with botulinum toxin, and a few months later with anthrax, without success. Two years later, members of the sect traveled to Zaire in an effort to obtain a culture of Ebola virus. It was, no doubt, a pioneering effort.

Are there any general conclusions to be drawn? The first is that the threat is here to stay and cannot be eliminated—there can be no final victory over the threat of biological weapons. The second is that international agreements are of limited use, that constant intelligence is of greater value, preemptive action being necessary. The third is that the end of the Cold War has made the world more dangerous, not safer, in that every man is now his own ideologist, and therefore the number of fanatics of every stripe is bound to increase. The balance between necessary surveillance and civil liberties will therefore become increasingly delicate.

Finally, biological weaponry exposes the extreme fragility of the relations in a complex society such as ours that make a decent life possible. For decades now we have been playing fast and loose with those relations as if nothing could destroy them. We have been living in a fool's paradise: It is time to recognize the dangers of frivolity. **NR**

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THE LONG VIEW

By Rob Long

Pen pals from America, as encouraged by President Bush

Dear Children in the Kindergarten Class of the Slayer of the Infidel Elementary School:

Hi. We are Miss Peters's kindergarten class at Rosa Parks Elementary. We are very sorry to hear about your country. Sometimes during Sharing Time we sing "Frère Jacques." Do you have "SpongeBob Squarepants" on your TV there? We do. We like to drink from juiceboxes. Okay, bye.

The Kids of Miss Peters's
Kindergarten Class

Children of America!

In the name of Allah the Beneficent and Merciful,

The cleansing flame of righteousness and justice burns bright and will consume you in its fury. The Great Satan will be turned back away from the gates and crushed by God's powerful army.

We do not get "SpongeBob Squarepants." We get "Blue's Clues" and "Zoboomafoo." Ali Marqua says that his cousin in America has seen "Monsters, Inc." and that children in America all have televisions. Also, we sometimes go for ice cream after Friday prayers or the stoning of a prostitute.

The Kids of Slayer of the Infidel
Elementary School Kindergarten Class

Dear fellow seventh-grader in Afghanistan:

Hi! My name is Melissa and I'm Class Vice-President of the seventh grade here at RFK Middle School! It is so incredibly awesome to write you a letter!!!!!!

I'm soooooooooooo sorry about what's happening in your country!!!!!!!!!!!! It's such a drag!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! I remember when I ran for president of the seventh-grade class and I didn't win because some people are so cliquey and snobby they would only vote for this other person who I won't name because her dad put in a pool and I was like so CRUSHED and totally BUMMED that I was like, okay, time to go shopping, which made me feel better especially buying lip gloss which is cool and my parents won't let me wear lipstick yet. So I think I know how you feel.

But CHEER UP!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! You can be anything you want to be!!!!!!!!! Don't dream it, be it!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Stay cool!!!!!!!!!

Luv,
Melissa

Dear Melissa:

In the name of Allah the Beneficent and Merciful,

The cleansing flame of righteousness and justice burns bright and will consume you in its fury. The Great Satan will be turned back away from the gates and crushed by God's powerful army.

Thanks for your awesome letter!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! I luvved the stickers!!!!!!!!!!!! Tomorrow is my birthday!!!!!! I'll be twelve years old which is so awesome!!!!!!!!!!

My parents won't let me wear lipstick either. Or any color other than black. My husband is a little cooler about it, but we all live in one room, so it's hard to try out the colors. Gotta go . . . baby's crying!

Luv,
Rameeza

Dear Afghan kid:

I'm writing this letter because my teacher was all "let's join the movement to create a peace bridge with Afghanistan" or whatever and I was all "okay but what is this some kind of pop quiz or whatever" and he was all "no just take class time today to write a letter to a kid in Afghanistan" and I was all "what am I going to say to some kid in Afghanistan or wherever" he was just "write whatever you want," so cool, no class today, just sitting here for like 45 minutes writing this.

It's like almost lunch time right now and I'm totally hungry and I brought four microwave burritos which I love.

Well, that's all I want to say and it's almost time for the bell to ring and I like to pack up all my stuff a few minutes before and sit kind of perched over my chair waiting for the bell so I can bolt out of here, so I'll just sign off and say be cool. That's all I want to say, be cool. That and that Eric Fenstermakker is a total wuss and a loser and I would appreciate it if you would write that somewhere on some wall there and e-mail me a picture of it so I can be all "hey Eric even in Afghanistan or wherever they know you're a wuss and a loser."

Later bro,
Dylan

Dear Dylan,

In the name of whatever and whatever. The powerful army of who cares will do whatever just some B.S. the mullahs make us say on account of they're so repressed and upset about their life and, like, how messed up it is.

Your letter was cool. It's cool about the burritos. Here we eat mutton and rice and flat bread which is like so pukey but my mom makes it okay. She's all "you have to eat you have to eat" and I'm all "Mom, just let me be, okay?"

Now that the Taliban or whatever have left the city it's pretty cool again and we can listen to Limp Bizkit which is totally cool because I totally love them. Can you send me some Limp Bizkit? I've never heard them but I know they totally rock!

Well, that's all. Do you have AOL? A guy I know knows this other guy in Shee'ra who has a computer that gets AOL so maybe you can IM me.

Could you write "Nazira is a stuck-up slut" on a wall somewhere and send me a picture of it so I can show Nazira that even in America they know that she thinks she's so great but she isn't and why won't she go out with me?

Catch you later,
Muhammad Al'zira

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HELP!!!!

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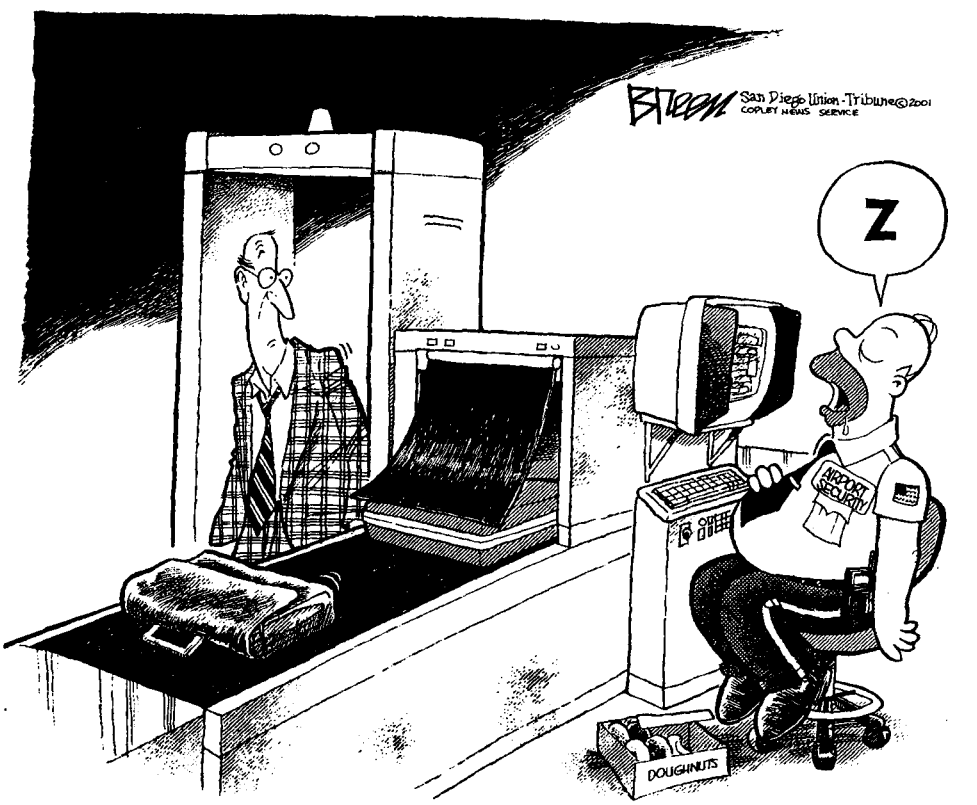
"If Clinton was so damn liberal and tolerant, how come he didn't name a drunk *to the Supreme Court?"*

How's He Doing?

Tom Ridge, that is: Both he and George
Meet in the Gents', at lunch,
And in the Oval Office; but
(And this is just a hunch),
With no clout and a budget most
Dogcatchers would deride,
Tom isn't working out—at least
That's how it looks outside.

—W. H. von Dreele



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Up from Pin Point

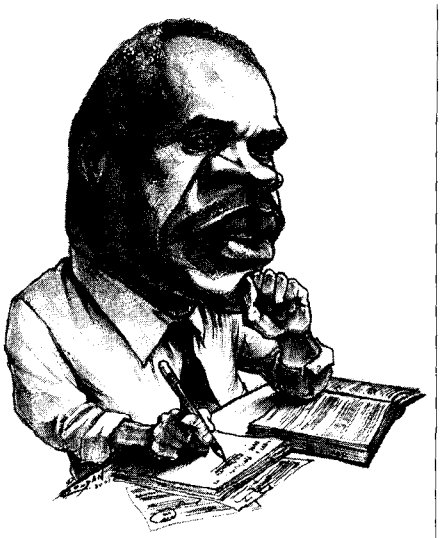
RAMESH PONNURU

Clarence Thomas: A Biography, by Andrew Peyton Thomas (Encounter, 661 pp., $29.95)

CLARENCE THOMAS, the most famous justice on the Supreme Court, is also the most fascinating. His rise from segregation and poverty is a compelling story; so is his political evolution from liberal to conservative. But until now, the only story that has been told about Thomas, certainly at book length, is that of his stormy confirmation hearings. Andrew Peyton Thomas corrects this deficiency in his new biography of Justice Thomas (to whom he is not related). While giving Anita Hill's allegation its due as a pivotal moment in Justice Thomas's life, the book also covers his career both before and after the hearings.

The book's most newsworthy revelation is that—contrary to his 1991 testimony—Thomas had in fact discussed *Roe* v. *Wade* on several occasions, and concluded that it had been decided incorrectly. Nobody, not even his handlers, believed his claim never to have had such discussions. (The author reports that they were incredulous when he made the claim in their prep sessions.)

But what will probably come as a bigger surprise to conservative readers is the news that Thomas was not a Reaganite when he served President Reagan as chairman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. In Reagan's first term, Thomas often clashed with conservative appointees who wanted to abolish racial preferences. The author attributes his softness not to intellectual disagreement but to personal ambition:



Justice Thomas by Ismael Roldan

"His comments on racial preferences at this time . . . reflected not so much anguish over choosing the right policy as an elaborate and ultimately unsuccessful attempt . . . to avoid being pinned down one way or the other on the highly charged issue." Thomas moved rightward on the issue after Reagan's re-election, a shift the author interprets as Thomas's attempt to get reappointed.

Thomas did not run the EEOC in line with liberal wishes either. He regarded its mission as enforcement of civil-rights protections for individuals, rather than the use of class-action suits to achieve social change. But much of his energy was spent on an even more basic task: rescuing the agency after the mismanagement of his predecessor, Eleanor Holmes Norton. He was largely successful, as the *Washington Post* acknowledged in a 1987 editorial titled "The EEOC Is Thriving." His traditionalist, chivalrous instincts led him, however, to one fateful mistake: supporting the use of civil-rights law to criminalize "sexual harassment."

Andrew Thomas's treatment of the EEOC years is typical of the book in two respects: He is very tough on what he regards as Thomas's failings, and he views Thomas as a canny, ambitious politician. He notes that Thomas expressed interest in joining the Supreme Court even when he had just started working in Washington, as a legislative assistant to John Danforth. It took him only twelve years to realize that desire. The author also reports that what he calls "the Pin Point strategy"—the emphasis during the confirmation battle on Thomas's humble beginnings in Pin Point, Ga.—was devised by Thomas himself, not any White House spinner.

The book is generally excellent on the confirmation hearings. All the familiar characters from ten years ago—the book's release was timed for the anniversary—make their appearance. Here is columnist Carl Rowan saying, "If you gave Clarence Thomas a little flour on his face, you'd think you had David Duke talking"; Joe Biden promising to defend Thomas, and then weaseling out; Nina Totenberg, prejudiced and peevish. The book also reminds conservatives that among their most effective allies during the confirmation battle were two of their least favorite Republican senators, Alan Simpson and Arlen Specter.

Andrew Thomas observes that Specter's "cross-examination of Anita Hill would serve as both roadmap and foundation for all subsequent analysis of Hill's charges." Hill was evasive or self-contradictory about her alleged fears of losing her job while working for Thomas and about her dealings with Democratic staffers. Two FBI agents disputed her account of their interview of her. And Hill has been slippery ever since. (These conclusions do not rely on David Brock's book on Hill, which is good since Brock himself has called the book's credibility into question.) The author also notes that Hill's charges do not fit with what we know of Thomas's personality. He is less persuasive in speculating about what Hill's motives were in defaming Thomas.

In the end, there were ironies on both sides: Liberals tried to use traditionalist sentiments about proper comportment around ladies to sink Thomas, but what ultimately saved his nomination was that blacks put racial solidarity ahead of their political views—something Thomas would generally not do. Southern

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Democrats, leery of offending Thomas's black supporters, put Thomas over the top.

Thanks to Hill, Thomas became the most famous justice on the Court; but he was also the most misunderstood. Until quite recently, liberal journalists have depicted Thomas as a "Scalia clone." That putdown was never justified. Thomas has generally been willing to go further than Scalia in reconsidering precedents that depart from the original understanding of the Constitution. Justice Scalia is seen as the bolder jurist in part because of his verbal pyrotechnics; Thomas—influenced by Justice Byron White—has avoided sharp rhetoric in his opinions.

The author sees Justice Thomas's judicial philosophy, like his political philosophy, as a mixture of libertarianism and traditionalism. The author's sympathies are clearly with the traditionalist, i.e., originalist, side of the justice's thought: He criticizes Thomas for abandoning originalism in free-speech cases. And while he appreciates Thomas's courage in taking on the shibboleths of racial liberalism—a courage he sets against Thomas's well-known aversion to participating in oral argument—he does not think that the official colorblindness Thomas favors is itself in keeping with originalism. But if aspects of Thomas's jurisprudence are open to question, the *bien-pensant* dismissal of it is just fashionable ignorance: "By the end of the 1992–93 term, those who questioned the independence or adequacy of Thomas's intellect either had not read his opinions or preferred to ignore or mischaracterize them."

Oddly, the book does not really delve into Thomas's views on race. He is presented as a lifelong critic of racial separatism—but he also supports black colleges against integrationist threats and disparages the notion that black students need to sit next to white students in order to receive a good education. These views can be reconciled, but the book doesn't attempt to do so. It is dead-on, however, in noticing a persistent theme in Thomas's thought: hatred of the suspicion of black inferiority. Pride plays a role here: The suspicions that affirmative action raised about his own achievements lay behind his initial doubts, and later fervent hostility, to the policy.

It was conservative values that brought Thomas to the Right. His Catholic grandfather had raised him to believe in personal responsibility. He drifted from the Catholic faith in his early adulthood, but he never really drifted from those values.

Andrew Thomas is a conservative, but his book does not degenerate into hagiography. Indeed, the book's chief manifestation of conservatism is the stern moralism it directs toward its subject. It faults Thomas for, among other things, his divorce, his political temporizing at the EEOC, his thin skin, and his occasional stretching of the truth about his past.

Often the biographer seems too tough a judge. Was the "Pin Point strategy" really a calculated strategy, for example, or a natural instinct? One can certainly criticize Justice Thomas for not disclosing his view of *Roe* v. *Wade* during his confirmation hearings. But Andrew Thomas goes further, suggesting that as a nominee he should have "defend[ed] the sanctity of life in the womb," and that his failure to do so meant that he "had retreated from the religion of his youth on crucial issues" and invited divine retribution in the form of Hill. The book also comes down hard on Thomas for wallowing in self-pity after the hearings. Perhaps Justice Thomas should indeed "move on," but the author does not display much sympathy for his ordeal. (In Andrew Thomas's defense, however, Justice Thomas appears to share some of his views. When the FBI was investigating Hill's charge, the book reports, Thomas himself wondered whether he was being punished for his sins.)

Justice Thomas did not cooperate with the author, and tried at first to keep others from cooperating. This was a mistake. Andrew Thomas mentions the justice's lack of pretension, his charm, his booming laugh, his free and easy dealings with low-level employees; these qualities would have come across more vividly had the author been able to experience them firsthand. Without his cooperation, the book turned out to be critical, but admiring. Andrew Thomas concludes that Justice Thomas is "one of the great intellectual and political rebels in American history." And the majority of his career on the Court, God willing, is still ahead of him. **NR**

Cap, a Life

JAY NORDLINGER

In the Arena: A Memoir of the 20th Century, by Caspar W. Weinberger, with Gretchen Roberts (Regnery, 412 pp., $34.95)

Of all the men in the Reagan era, few made as deep an impression as Caspar Weinberger. And by "Reagan era," we mean, in this case, Sacramento, too, for "Cap" was there—working by the governor's side. He was also with Nixon and Ford, in Washington. And he has managed to be in several other interesting places as well. In 1990, Weinberger published a book called *Fighting for Peace: Seven Critical Years in the Pentagon*. It was a solid book, but the Weinberger career—and life—deserved a better one. With *In the Arena*, it is here.

The phrase "in the arena" will be instantly familiar to any student of American politics, culled as it is from the famous Teddy Roosevelt passage about "the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood"—who is not a mere spectator, or critic. The title was used by Nixon, for one of his many post-presidential books, and also by Charlton Heston, for his 1995 autobiography. By the time Weinberger realized this, it was too late: The book had already gone too far in the publication process. But, worn as it may be, the title fits.

From the beginning, Weinberger identified with TR, for Cap, like that president, was a sickly boy, who aspired to be a man of strength and importance. He was born in San Francisco in the portentous year of 1917. Weinberger subtitles his book "a memoir of the 20th century"; the description is not overly grand. He attended a parade in honor of Lucky Lindy, who had just crossed the Atlantic. He went to see a defeated President Hoover cast his vote in November 1932. And he remembers the building of the

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Golden Gate Bridge: the "lines of desperate, out-of-work, able-bodied men who would wait, day after day, for one of the construction workers to fall or injure himself so they could take his place."

The boy was always smitten by politics and government. By 15, he was reading the Congressional Record "avidly and daily." He made endless scrapbooks filled with bits about the national conventions and the like. He was an incorrigible Republican, arguing to one and all about the "Soviet menace" and the beauty of small government. In his senior year of high school, he was elected student-body president, promising a new constitution. His graduation speech was entitled "The Honorable Profession of Politics."

With a scholarship to Harvard College, he was really on his way. He majored in government, though he found the classes "lifeless" and tinged with "liberal bias." He spent much of his time in journalism, contributing a column to a magazine back home, and becoming president of the *Crimson*, the student newspaper. He was intensely idealistic, then as now: The "street side" of Dexter Gate said, "Enter to Grow in Wisdom"; the "Yard side" said, "Depart to Serve Better Thy Country and Thy Kind." "It has been an inspiration to me ever since." There is no snickering in Weinberger.

He went on to Harvard Law School, but then the war came, although the U.S. was not yet in it. Weinberger wanted to get started nonetheless. He tried to join the RAF or the Canadian force, but poor eyesight kept him out. He finished law school in June 1941, then signed up with the U.S. infantry in September, still eager, and restless: He idolized Churchill, and saw the conflict as one of pure good and evil. After Pearl Harbor, he was sent to Australia, and ended up a captain on General MacArthur's intelligence staff. One day, Eleanor Roosevelt came to visit—and Weinberger, ever the die-hard Republican, made himself scarce. "I took my politics rather too seriously then," he nicely notes.

After V-J Day, it was back to California and law practice—and politics. Weinberger always had a perfectly fine job at a law firm, but he was forever looking for ways into public life. "The trouble with Cap," said a friend, "is that he can't stand making money." His all-enduring wife, Jane, would sigh over her husband's "non-profit activities." He was elected to the state assembly, ran for attorney general—losing—and served as chairman of the California GOP. He also kept his hand in journalism, writing a column and hosting a public-TV show called *Profile: Bay Area*. Among his guests was "an extremely eloquent and persuasive Malcolm X."

When Reagan was elected governor, he called on Weinberger to be the state's finance director. Not long after, Nixon called, from Washington—to ask Cap to serve as chairman of the Federal Trade Commission. He did so. Then he became deputy director of the Office of Management and Budget (under George Shultz), then director. (It was in this period that Weinberger earned the nickname "Cap the Knife"—a William Safire coinage.) He ended his Nixon-Ford career as secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare. Weinberger is engrossing on the various Nixon weirdnesses, and on the major policy debates of the time, including the (pathetic) imposition of wage and price controls. Gerald Ford, he holds in suitably high esteem.

It was when Reagan called again—this time after being elected president—that Weinberger had his real rendezvous with destiny: serving as secretary of defense at a time when the military desperately needed rebuilding; only six years after the helicopters had lifted off from the embassy roof in Saigon; when the Soviet Union was enjoying unprecedented advantage. Weinberger may be seen as the very embodiment of Peace Through Strength, a meaningful slogan for once. He saw things with rare moral clarity, and talked that way, and acted that way. He and Reagan were intent on *rollback*—musty notion—not détente. In the present volume, Weinberger gives what is probably as good a short brief for Reagan's foreign and defense policies as can be found.

He also includes a chapter on the Iran-contra affair, a nightmare for him, as for many others. The harassment of Weinberger was clearly unjustified, and he was (preemptively) pardoned by the first President Bush on Christmas Eve Day 1992. Weinberger immediately wrote Bush a letter thanking him, and he has written a similar note of appreciation on December 24 every year since. About the president-between-the-Bushes, Weinberger is blistering, charging that "the Clinton administration inexcusably hollowed out our military capability"—and charging much more, too. He closes his book with reflections on his recent experiences as a top man at Forbes, Inc.

It is, in many ways, a formidable book. It comments incisively on the events, ideas, and political personalities of a very long and difficult stretch. There is a ton of detail here, and the reader will not want to wade through it all; but it is not frivolous detail. Weinberger is at least as absorbed by domestic affairs as he is by grand world affairs. He has written a deeply personal book, too. He expresses great love: for his parents, for his brother, for his wife, for his children—and that's not to mention other objects of love, such as California and country (and cooking—Weinberger is always critiquing the food, from the Army to the Bohemian Grove). The author, throughout, is modest, self-deprecating, amusing, candid, earnest, and naturally patriotic. There is in these pages an overarching sense of decency. Weinberger is a throwback (high

FATE

The river is our curse and our temperament.
It is a god, a twisted dragon that
struggles to reach the Pacific.

Up on the mountain stands Yu the Great
gazing at the coppery loops and curves,
his palm turned downward to soothe the turbulence

in the water and in our veins.
The sky is calm, the clouds motionless.
To have a peaceful year is fortunate

although from the moon you would see
the river, its back arched and tightened,
ready to leap again.

—HA JIN

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compliment). He is a Frank Capra American, though never naïve. He reminds one a lot of Reagan: a more detail-oriented Reagan, without the Hollywood past.

The book is far from sugary, and not only with respect to Bill Clinton and other Democrats: Weinberger unquestionably has Nixon's number, and he jabs repeatedly at George Shultz, who was long a rival, and often in Cap's way (as Weinberger would see it). This is by no means a score-settling or resentful book, but neither is it docile.

In telling his story, Weinberger is keen not only to pronounce on major events, but to inform readers what it was like simply to be around: what the desks and telephones in the defense secretary's office were like; how a typical day went. Although he is "in the arena," he is also the wide-eyed spectator, delighting in the workings and pomp of government. He is wowed at inaugurations, and reverent in the presence of Congressional Medal of Honor winners. At one point, he writes, "Now I, a schoolboy from California, was making decisions that might affect the course of history." OMB was "particularly good fun for someone as fascinated by government as I am." OMB "particularly good fun"? Weinberger is a wonk with a song in his heart.

It is impossible—at least I found it so—not to read this book in the light of September 11. It is also impossible—at least I found it so—not to conclude that this is exactly the kind of man we could use right now, many times over. But then, he is the kind of man this country can always use.

One of his best anecdotes involves a college visit to the home of a buddy's fiancée: The fiancée was a younger sister of Katharine Hepburn. Mrs. Hepburn—the mother—"was a vigorous, earthy woman," and also a staunch political liberal.

> At dinner one night, she listened to me defend, in a rather halting and shy way, some of my conservative beliefs, and finally she grabbed my hand and said, "Let me see your palm! Where *do* you get all this?!" She studied it for quite a while, and then, with great irritation, pronounced, "My God, you're going to live forever!"

If only. **NR**

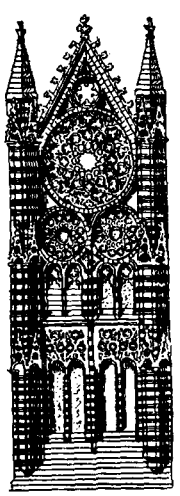
Pure Simon

JEFFREY HART

Dreamers of Dreams: Essays on Poets and Poetry, by John Simon (Ivan R. Dee, 265 pp., $26)

NATIONAL REVIEW readers are familiar with John Simon's writing about movies, but in other venues he has written on just about everything, and with the same stringency. Here we have him on poets and poetry, and it is a dazzling book. Simon is courageously lucid, literate in several languages, formidably erudite, and can turn a phrase into a rapier—as when he observes that Whitman reads as well (or badly) in French as in English.

Woven into these fine essays are bits of autobiography. At Harvard, Simon wrote his Ph.D. dissertation on the prose-poem genre, focusing on the difficult Arthur Rimbaud; he assisted the legendary polymath Harry Levin in his big course on modern comparative literature. (Why Harvard did not anoint Simon as Levin's successor is beyond me; from that missed moment literary studies at Harvard have declined precipitously.) In thinking of Levin with Simon at his side, one irresistibly recalls the great Benjamin Jowett, the redoubtable Oxford classicist about whom the student jingle went: "Here I come, my name is Jowett / All there is to know, I know it / What I don't know, is not knowledge / I am the Master of this College." One is also reminded of Harvard's own George Lyman Kittredge, a Chaucerian and Shakespearian who refused to take the oral examination for his Ph.D., explaining, "No one at Harvard is competent to examine me." Kittredge, by the way, unsuccessfully opposed tenure for Levin on the grounds that Levin was Jewish. *Gaudeamus igitur.*



Among the important matters Simon deals with here are Eliot's *Quartets*, Robert Graves and his dominatrix Laura Riding (what's in a name?), James Merrill, the "New York School" of poets, Oscar Wilde's poetry, a virtually unknown great poem about sexual intercourse (I will reprint this for you in a moment), Mallarmé, Rimbaud, Rilke, Larkin, Celan, Verlaine, Akhmatova, Brodsky, and a roundup review of 19 poets in translation, most of them awful, including some early lyrics by Karol Wojtyla, clearly not yet infallible.

Simon's approach is careful and intelligent, paying close attention to technique. The many languages in which he is fluent enable him to be especially persuasive when he evaluates translations of lyric poetry, many of the properties of which tend to be almost untranslatable.

Among Simon's many accomplishments in this book is making the persuasive case for a new look at Oscar Wilde's poetry. Long ago I decided that Wilde was a purveyor of paste gems, utterly derivative, a sort of anthologizer of the weakest aspects of the Romantic tradition. But Simon demonstrates that Wilde in his later lyrics did develop a distinctive voice and style that made worthwhile his technical skill. Simon is also delightful in his demythologization of the so-called New York School of poets (John Ashbery, Frank O'Hara, Kenneth Koch, and James Schuyler). With disarming—and amusing—candor, Simon writes: "To put my cards on the table . . . I declare that none of these poets has written what I would call a single poem of any importance." True; and I will myself here toss some cards on the table. I have read perhaps 50 poems by John Ashbery, and have taken the pledge: I will not read one more poem by him. He strings words together in pleasant patterns, but nothing happens; there's no there there. When Boswell asked Johnson whether any modern man could have written the Ossian poems, Johnson replied, "Any man, any woman, any child." This applies to Ashbery.

Simon's essay on James Merrill, a very

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gifted poet, opens a window on abnormal psychology. Merrill's life combined high culture with a continuous homosexual orgy. "There are witty aperçus, as when Merrill observes two of his male friends together: 'Pangs reserved exclusively for the gay shot through me—I was jealous of both parties at once.'"

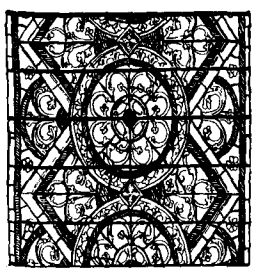
■

Nobody can justly accuse Simon of critical timidity.

■

Simon is so engaging and perspicacious a commentator that one is surprised to come upon such a judgment as the following: "For me, the Arch Poet of the modern English language has always been Robert Graves. E. E. Cummings, Louis MacNeice, Dylan Thomas, and John Crowe Ransom follow closely, but Graves is 'it.'" That is so far outside the informed consensus that has evolved over the last 50 years that it would take sustained argumentation and demonstration even to attempt to defend it. In actuality, it is not sustainable. The consensus, as of the end of the 20th century, would be this: Eliot, Yeats (or Yeats, Eliot), Frost, Auden, Stevens, Pound. That, gentlemen, as Hemingway would say, is the "A" team.

Nobody can justly accuse Simon of critical timidity. Here's another example: "It would be preposterous, indeed foolish, to try to pick the greatest love poem in the English language. But I will stick my neck out and name my candidate for the finest overlooked love poem in modern English." After that first sentence, one starts thinking of Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress" and Donne's "To His Mistress Going to Bed" (Elegy XIX); the second sentence lowers the bar somewhat, but, as it turns out, not that much. Simon has unearthed a very fine, almost unknown poem by one Eric Robertson Dodds, professor of classics at Oxford. Dodds's other poetry was undistinguished; this one, however, entitled "When the Ecstatic Body Grips," beautifully describes the strength and ambiguity of one kind of sexual experience.



When the ecstatic body grips
Its heaven, with little sobbing cries,
And lips are crushed on hot blind
lips,
I read strange pity in your eyes.

For that in you which is not mine,
And that in you which I love best,
And that, which my day-thoughts
divine
Masterless still, still unpossessed,

Sits in the blue eyes' frightened
stare,
A naked lonely-dwelling thing,
A frail thing from its body-lair
Drawn at my body's summoning;

Whispering low, "O unknown man,
Whose hunger on my hunger
wrought,
Body shall give what body can,
Shall give you all—save what you
sought."

Whispering, "O secret one, forgive,
Forgive and be content though still
Beyond the blood's surrender live
The darkness of the separate will.

"Enough if in the veins we know
Body's delirium, body's peace—
Ask not that ghost to ghost shall go,
Essence in essence merge and
cease."

But swiftly, as in sudden sleep,
That You in you is veiled or dead;
And the world's shrunken to a heap
Of hot flesh straining on a bed.

That is a strong piece of writing by an obscure don. Not coincidentally did I think of 17th-century dialogues between body and soul. One must judge the man's behavior as deplorable: The goal is not to frighten the woman, let alone hurt her. He should have heeded those Renaissance commentators on love who urged *mesure*, "moderation," or, in the circumstances, "consideration." But congratulations to Simon for discovering this poem, and champagne to him for a dazzling book. **NR**

Empire Restored

JOHN DERBYSHIRE

Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire, by David Cannadine (Oxford, 264 pp., $25)

WHAT on earth was the British Empire all about? It was a money racket, thought Orwell. No, it was an exercise in racial self-aggrandizement, said Edward Said. Part of a divine plan moving mankind toward unification, thought James Morris (who later, incidentally, became a woman, known as "Jan" Morris). The most popular idea among the people who actually ran the Empire—at any rate among the reflective minority of them—seems to have been that it was a selfless civilizing mission, bringing light to dark places: the sentiment implied in Kipling's poem "The White Man's Burden."

All of the above, says David Cannadine, at least in some parts of the Empire, some of the time. His purpose is not to deny or overturn anyone else's pet theory, but to draw attention to an aspect of the Empire that, in his opinion, has been too little regarded. As much as anything, he argues, the Empire was about dressing up.

Well, that is to over-simplify somewhat. Cannadine is a respectable scholar, one of the fine cohort of British historians who have made their mark in the past 20 years: Simon Schama, Niall Ferguson, Roy Porter, Norman Stone, Linda Colley (to whom Cannadine is married). He taught at Columbia for ten years from 1988, an experience he credits with giving him the "cold eye" required to see the Empire plain: "You get the warm heart if you live here [i.e., in England], but you need to go to America to get the cold eye." Hmm. Be that as it may, the thrust of Cannadine's thesis is that, in his own words, "the British Empire was not primarily about race or color, but about class and status." Again: "We . . . need to recognize that there were other ways of seeing the Em-

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pire than in the oversimplified categories of black and white with which we are so preoccupied. It is time we reoriented orientalism."

That last is, of course, a shot aimed at Edward Said's 1978 book *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, at the tremendous influence of that book, and at the, well, empire of academic studies it has generated, with spin-off colonies in Critical Race Theory, Feminist History, Queer Theory, and all the rest of the dreary catalog of "postmodernist" scholarly logrolling. Cannadine's title is another tweak of Professor Said's ear. Certainly, he agrees, race was a factor in the way the Empire was seen by those who ran it; but it was always liable to be trumped by class. The delicious anecdote that has caught everyone's eye appears in the book's prologue, and sets the mood for what follows. It takes place in the summer of 1881, when King Kalakaua of Hawaii, visiting England, was invited to a dinner party at which the Prince of Wales (the future Edward VII) was also to be present. The prince insisted that King Kalakaua should take precedence in the seating arrangements over the crown prince of Germany, who was his own brother-in-law and the future Kaiser. To back up his insistence, our Bertie offered the following flawless gem of imperial logic: "Either the brute is a king, or he's a common or garden nigger; and if the latter, what's he doing here?"

It is, of course, not news that the British have a thing about class. The copy of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* that has somehow survived from my own schooldays back in the mother country gives the third stanza of Mrs. Alexander's hymn "All Things Bright and Beautiful" as follows:

> The rich man in his castle,
> The poor man at his gate,
> God made them, high or lowly,
> And order'd their estate.

That was written in the 1840s. The hymn was bowdlerized some time in the 1970s to bring its sentiments into line with more contemporary pieties, but English—or, at any rate, Anglican—children sang it for 130 years, and took its sentiment with them to India, Africa, and the dominions.

In some of those regions the imperialists found hierarchies already in place, and eagerly co-opted them. Indian princes, African chieftains, and Arab sheiks were wooed, intimidated, or bribed—with varying degrees of success—into doing the Empire's work for it. Where local societies were at a more primitive level, as in Australia, a strenuous effort was made to import England's own hierarchy and impose it upon the white settlers. Sir Bernard Burke, who created the two bibles of domestic British snobbery, Burke's *Peerage* and Burke's *Landed Gentry*, followed them up with a third volume: Burke's *Colonial Gentry*. Fitzwilliam Wentworth of Sydney belonged to a family that, according to Burke, "is said by genealogists to have derived its designation in Saxon times."

■

Cannadine's book is lovely, full of insights and unfamiliar perspectives.

■

All this was made visible by the extravagant employment of the British genius for theater—for uniforms, badges, braids, emblems, titles, plumed hats, and other marks of rank; for statues and monuments, parades and ceremonies, and the acting-out of empty but spectacular mass rituals, like the great receptions—known as durbars—that punctuated the history of British India. What a show we British can put on! The anthem of the later Empire was a vocal version of *Pomp and Circumstance* No. 1 by Sir Edward Elgar. It is still sung lustily every year on the last night of the "Proms" (the Promenade Concerts held annually since 1895)—though this year, because that night fell on September 15, Sir Edward's "rumbustious jollity" was felt to be inappropriate, and was replaced by the American national anthem.

Yet while all that pomp made the Empire a very impressive thing to look upon, circumstance was eating away at the foundations. The whole thing was, as Cannadine explains masterfully, really just an escapist romantic fantasy, a flight from the horrors and uncertainties of urbanization and modernization into the slow rural rhythms, comforting hierarchies, and costumes and rituals of feudal Britain. Dining with his Indian princes, a viceroy could forget the industrial unrest back home. The universal contempt for the "babu" (the educated native) blinded the eyes of the imperialists—all classes of them—to the rather obvious fact that these were the people they most depended on to run the show, and the ones who would ultimately inherit it. Meanwhile, the "white dominions" were filling up, as the old American colonies had, with people whose main motive in emigrating from Britain was not to plant the suffocating old feudal hierarchies on a foreign shore, but to escape from them.

And so it all came to dust at last. David Cannadine does not spend much time in elegiacs—for that we already have the wonderful and indispensable James/Jan Morris books. He does, however, make some good points about how the hierarchical fantasies of the British ruling classes left their mark on the world we inhabit today. Their fascination with the dashing sheiks of Araby, for example, and their belief that they could strengthen, co-opt, and modernize the native hierarchies of that part of the world, joined with their dislike of the thrusting, mercantile, urban Jews to create the pro-Arabist mindset that still bedevils the Foreign Office and generates miscalculations to this day. (A similar mindset haunts the U.S. State Department, too, but that is a different story.)

This is a lovely book, full of insights and unfamiliar perspectives. Were the rulers of Victoria's Empire more snobbish or more racist? They hardly knew the difference, for the common people of their own nation were very little less mysterious or threatening to them than the dark sullen masses of India or Africa. At least this much can be said, though, and David Cannadine says it: The snobbery diluted and tempered the racism. "It may be that hierarchical empires and societies, where inequality was the norm, were . . . less racist than egalitarian societies, where there was (and is?) no alternative vision of the social order from that of collective, antagonistic and often racial identities." On this, as on much else, he is provocative—and may very well be right. **NR**

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Fundamental Wrongs

CARLA T. MAIN

Beggars and Choosers: How the Politics of Choice Shapes Adoption, Abortion, and Welfare in the United States, by Rickie Solinger (Hill & Wang, 284 pp., $25)

In this new book—her third on the subject of abortion—historian Rickie Solinger contends that the right to choose to have an abortion has been trivialized by political interest groups, which have reduced it to little more than a consumer right, similar to the right to choose among shoe styles or brands of potato chips. In abortion, as in any other area of public policy, women are viewed as good or bad consumers (which is to say, choice makers), and are either punished or rewarded with tax breaks and the like, depending on the policy initiative a particular interest group has succeeded in enacting into law. Solinger argues that women will never be truly empowered until their reproductive rights are treated as "fundamental," and taken more seriously than the process of picking out shoes.

The biggest problem with this premise is that what Solinger wishes for has already taken place—but she doesn't much care for the result. The Supreme Court has, in fact, recognized a fundamental liberty right to a first-trimester abortion, and it is precisely this that has created the current situation: Women today are free actors on abortion, but they are fairly subject to policy and social pressures in their deliberations on this issue, as they would be in any other important life decision. But because the high court established a fundamental liberty right in the realm of reproduction, Solinger bristles at the thought that lawmakers, traditional feminists (whom she blames for espousing the language of "choice"), and academics can argue for or against policy or social influences that create incentives for women to exercise or refrain from exercising those rights.

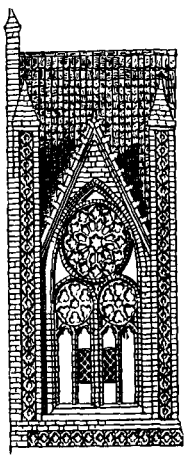
Solinger starts out by criticizing *Roe* v. *Wade* for couching the language of abortion rights in terms of "choice," rather than as a "fundamental" right. It is this lapse, she argues, that gave rise over the last three decades to a culture in which lawmakers and others can label women as bad choice makers in order to justify conservative policy goals (such as limiting welfare benefits). An early example of this pernicious trend was the Supreme Court's 1980 decision upholding the constitutionality of the Hyde amendment, which made unlawful the funding of most (but not all) Medicaid abortions.

■

Roe made abortion a 'fundamental' right. That's the problem.

■

In fact, however, the *Roe* decision *did* couch the right to an abortion in the language of a fundamental right; indeed, it went out on a judicial limb to do so. It was precisely the fundamental nature, as *Roe* defined it, of the right to terminate pregnancy that gave rise to the "choice" language that came to dominate the abortion dialogue in the ensuing decades. Confronted with a brand-new fundamental right, the American people began to have a serious debate on the question of abortion.



In *Roe*, Justice Harry Blackmun held that the right to terminate a first-trimester pregnancy does not arise solely from the fuzzy penumbra of privacy protections emanating from the Bill of Rights, but instead emerges directly from the Fourteenth Amendment right to liberty. As a consequence, it may be subject to state interference only where there is a compelling governmental interest—a very exacting constitutional test. (*Roe* also concluded, of course, that as pregnancies progress through the second and third trimesters, the government has an increasingly compelling interest in regulating them, for health and safety reasons.)

In essence, Blackmun went 28 years ago where Solinger argues we need to go today. But as Justice Rehnquist explained in his dissent in *Roe*, Fourteenth Amendment liberties are not guaranteed absolutely; they are guaranteed only against deprivation without due process of law. The traditional test of such unlawful deprivation was whether the state had a rational basis for interfering in the private transaction at issue—and "rational basis" is a much less difficult standard to meet than "compelling interest." In other words, the threshold for state interference used to be lower, and what Blackmun did in *Roe* was raise the bar.

It is hard to imagine just how that right could be made any more fundamental than the court already made it in *Roe*. But in Solinger's view, a reproductive right is no more than a hollow promise if the government fails to take active measures (e.g., paying for abortions and supporting unwed mothers) to ensure that the right is exercised. Of course, the Constitution nowhere provides that the government is under an affirmative obligation to subsidize the enjoyment of liberty rights for its citizens. (The arguable exception is the Sixth Amendment right to counsel in the face of a capital or "otherwise infamous crime.") Rather, the Constitution tells us what government may *not* do to interfere with citizens' liberties, leaving citizens free to exercise their freedoms or not, and leaving to federal and state legislatures the right to implement policy through public spending.

Indeed, Justice Potter Stewart (who concurred with Blackmun in a separate opinion in *Roe*) wrote in his majority opinion in the 1980 Medicaid-abortion decision that "it simply does not follow that a woman's freedom of choice carries with it a constitutional entitlement to the financial resources to avail herself of the full range of protected choices. . . . Although government may not place obstacles in the path of a woman's exercise of her freedom of choice, it need not remove those not of

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its own creation. Indigency falls in the latter category."

The Hyde amendment, and the Supreme Court decision upholding it, did not prevent states from continuing to fund abortions through state Medicaid plans; it left that question to state legislatures and state courts. In response, over the past 20 years there has been a groundswell of state-level political advocacy seeking state abortion funding for poor women; to date, according to the National Abortion Rights Action League, 18 states provide broad-based public funding for abortions (ranging from all abortions to medically necessary abortions), while nearly all other states fund (in conjunction with federal Medicaid) abortions in cases of rape, incest, or saving the life of the mother.

Solinger does not address the political activity taking place at the state level, and in the end her polemics fail to make a persuasive case that poor women have actually been denied a fundamental liberty right. The Centers for Disease Control has painted a much broader—and more convincing—picture, in which the decline in the number of abortions during the 1990s was occasioned not simply by restricted access to abortions, but by a host of other factors as well, including better access to (and more effective) birth control.

Solinger's book also illustrates the division within the women's movement on the subject of adoption. Her dislike of adoption is nothing short of vitriolic: She views it not chiefly as a valuable alternative to abortion, but as a mechanism for the disempowering and oppression of low-income women. Solinger's attitude in this regard crystallizes the essential failing of the women's movement: its ambivalence about motherhood. Although we have come a long way since the days when women were told they needed a man "like a fish needs a bicycle," the implicit message of feminism continues to be that a woman needs a uterus like a fish needs a bicycle. This message has so infused the rhetoric of women's rights in this country that it still leads to the kind of confused and strident work that Solinger has produced in this book. **NR**

■ CITY DESK ■

Tough Act to Follow

RICHARD BROOKHISER

ELECTIONS typically belong to the news of New York, not its nature, but the mayor's race of 2001 qualifies as an elemental event—not for who won, but for who left and how.

Since New York City has a population greater than that of many states, and many members of the U.N. General Assembly, New Yorkers have acquired an inflated notion of the importance of their politicking. In fact it is the usual municipal game of flattery and robbery, practiced by midgets; the energies of the city simply flow elsewhere, to money, work, and entertainment. Think of the supposedly historic mayors of our lifetime. John Lindsay was gorgeous and dumb. Ed Koch beguiled us, but his tenure was only a pit stop in the Grand Prix of disaster. David Dinkins enjoyed a week's fame as the first black mayor, before he proved to be a self-pitying incompetent. You could count the truly significant leaders of the last three and a half centuries on one hand, and still have a finger left over: Director General of New Netherland Peter Stuyvesant (tough, bigoted); Mayor and Governor DeWitt Clinton (built the Erie Canal); Grand Sachem of Tammany Hall William M. Tweed (built many public works, stole millions); Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia (honest, obnoxious).

As the list of even our heroes suggests, success often comes attended with flaws. Four months before the end of his second term as mayor, Rudy Giuliani looked as if he would join this select and deformed company. His achievement was obvious, and colossal. He took a city driven into the valley of the shadow of death by the feebleness of his predecessor, and brought it out. The feral skulked; order returned to public spaces. Giuliani gave ordinary citizens their daily lives, unmenaced by grossness and fear, and he gave politicians the stern lesson that their task was not hopeless, and that the blame for their failures properly rests, not with Spenglerian tides of decay, but squarely with them.

His flaws, though less consequential, were also obvious. He was a bully. He boldly faced down the race hustlers, but he lacked the art to finesse or belittle them, as Franklin Roosevelt or Ronald Reagan might have done. The year 2000 was a carnival and a psychodrama: He battled cancer, paraded a mistress, and blew up his marriage (though his missus

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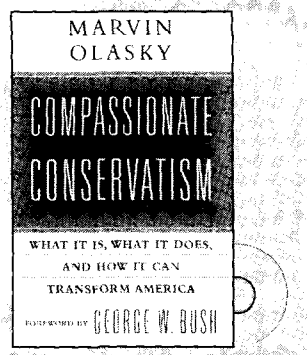
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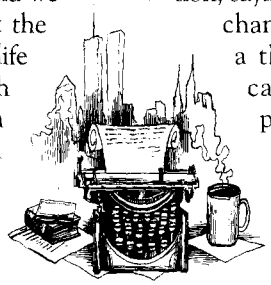
was no prize; any wife who acts in *The Vagina Monologues* deserves what she gets). As his second term wound down, you could already hear the voice of the History Channel narrator, circa 2010, intoning the banalities of biography: "the rise and the fall . . . saved his city, but not himself . . ."

Then came the attack, and we saw the birth of a god: not the Almighty, but a larger-than-life being who walked through smoke and woe and seldom put a foot wrong. He was a Titan, infused with the pathos of a saint; the cop who could speak to us, the firefighter we could see. He was firm, consoling, anguished; he was everywhere, and he admitted that he did not know everything. New York being a town of analysts and analysands, I had several conversations about how disaster causes regression to childhood. In an hour Giuliani became the father figure for 8 million children. Why be ashamed to admit it?



Leadership regularly comes to that; the genius of great democratic leaders is to herd the confused and the fearful, while simultaneously restoring to them their dignity. Giuliani showed New Yorkers how to be brave, then praised them for their bravery. There was one sour moment when he meddled in the election, saying that he would like the rules changed to allow a third term, or a three-month extension. The carpers came out like spring peepers. Then the anthrax letters were mailed; the city tumbled back to the nursery, and Giuliani once more coaxed us out of it.

Now, thanks to the magic of term limits, he is leaving us. The sense of shrinkage is vertiginous. Never, in two decades of voting here, had I seen such long lines and long faces. Uncharacteristically, for a gladiatorial hack, I had not made up my mind when I entered my polling place. I had been inclined to the liberal Mark Green, on the principle of preferring the devil I know, until a picture of Green and Bill Clinton on the front page of Election Day's *Times* tilted me toward the liberal Michael Bloomberg (I ended with the devil).

Everyone I talked to expressed the same uncertainty. A conservative friend changed his mind four times while waiting in line; he decided to vote for Bloomberg because Bloomberg had been accused of sexual harassment. My wife asked a liberal friend whom she had voted for. "Bloomberg." "Why?" "Because I know Mark Green."

The two champions of the system that is America's answer to the system of government by *sharia* were alike in ideology, in their bizarre lack of relevant qualifications, and in their charisma quotient. Green had the charm of the undead. Bloomberg spoke like an alien in a science-fiction movie: "I am Bloomberg! Though I am four feet tall, I am seventy million years old! You have trespassed on my sector of the galaxy!"

At the end, Green gave a concession speech that was as gracious as his nature would permit, and Mayor-elect Bloomberg said one perfect thing: "New York is alive and well and open for business!" May God strengthen his arm; all of our arms. The Wednesday after Election Day, I was in midtown, scrambling for a cab. Heavy traffic shouldered down the cross streets. Stepping into Fifth Avenue, I found myself in a sudden pool of calm, enforced by traffic police. A few blocks down was St. Patrick's Cathedral, with a small crowd in front of it, and the strange Irish wail of bagpipes. The dead are still departing; there are a lot more to leave yet. Our enemies should enjoy the interval. Their end is coming, and there will be no bagpipes. **NR**

LEGACY

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Put Your Bodies Upon the Wheels: Student Revolt in the 1960s, by Kenneth J. Heineman (Ivan R. Dee, 251 pp., $26)

In February 1960, four black students sat down at a Greensboro, N.C., lunch counter; by April 1970, the U.S. would be experiencing 5,000 terrorist bombings in a mere 15 months. How did a just civil rights struggle end in the Weathermen and Kent State? Kenneth J. Heineman's study closely follows student activism from its religious and pacifist beginnings to its takeover by a militant, anti-American New Left. Of particular interest are the book's hard figures, which afford a much-needed reminder that the history of that decade was rewritten by its winners. Flower-powered sexual "liberation," for instance, was accompanied by an unsurprising spike in rape. And the antiwar movement was never the juggernaut Hollywood portrays: In 1967, a majority of UCLA students favored marijuana legalization; only a minority opposed the Vietnam War. Unfortunately, Heineman's conclusion—that "we will continue to feel the effects of the 1960s shock waves until the last Boomers are retired from campus, the newsroom, and political office"—vastly underestimates that era's legacy. By way of the universities, the Sixties poisoned the groundwater of American cultural life. Its teachings now live not just in politically correct fads, as Heineman suggests, but as the merely normal, the expected. Today, what used to be called "radical chic" is neither.

—Emmy Chang

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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

On Getting to Know Our Past Presidents

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 2

MR. BUSH has signed an executive order that assigns to sitting presidents the authority to hold back the publication of papers belonging to antecedent presidents—even those papers that past presidents would like to release. In matter-of-fact terms, this means, e.g., that if Bill Clinton wanted some of his papers on his Mideast diplomacy published, and George W. wanted them kept quiet, George W. would prevail—all of this in the interest of "orderly process." There are hoots and hollers from academic lobbyists, while the laity mostly just look on; we are happy to get whatever we can get, because curiosity about presidential goings and comings is persistent, if voyeuristic. And that brings up the remarkable new book by Richard Reeves, *President Nixon: Alone in the White House*.

The book attracts curiosity, even if it doesn't satisfy it—can't satisfy it, inasmuch as Mr. Nixon becomes progressively inscrutable. But Mr. Reeves, with his gift for candor and piquancy, takes advantage of the huge repository of material pertaining to Richard Nixon's presidency. For someone who yearned for privacy and spent untold hours communing with himself in a room in the Executive Office Building, there is no precedent for the comprehensiveness of Richard Nixon's self-ambush. 1) Nixon kept a journal, which survives. 2) The journal of his principal aide, H. R. Haldeman, is there, with day-by-day luridities. And 3) There are the legendary tapes, which on August 9, 1974, escorted him out of office with everything but an armed guard.

Dwell, for a moment, on Mr. Nixon the war leader, caught up in the dilemma of late April 1970. If he didn't do something to try to check the North Vietnamese coming into Cambodia, he foresaw a successful drive by the enemy overwhelming Cambodia and Laos: How would he answer his critics if that were to happen? On the other hand, American intervention in the burgeoning North Vietnamese operation meant triggering coast-to-coast caterwauling by the resistance class, from students on up through and including the retired establishment of the Johnson set who had got the U.S. ambivalently embarked in Vietnam in the first place.

Here is the kind of thing intimate access to presidential papers can do for a biographer:

We have the volatile Nixon. "The President was not smiling after the meeting. He called Kissinger into the Oval Office and shouted at him in almost uncontrolled rage."

Nixon the brooding general. "Nixon was spending a good deal of time alone or talking with members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He was playing [the role of General George] Patton, or so it occasionally seemed to the few White House staffers who knew he [had been] watching the movie again. 'Americans have never lost a war and will never lose a war because the very thought of losing is hateful to Americans' was a favorite *Patton* line. Now the president was pacing back and forth in the office and outside in the Rose Garden with his hands locked behind him, the same way actor George C. Scott did playing the general."

Nixon off duty, exercising grandiosity fueled by booze. "The President called again after watching *Patton* once more. His words slurred together as he gave Kissinger orders—with [Kissinger aide] Watts listening in on an extension. Finally Nixon said, 'Wait a minute. [Nixon intimate Bebe Rebozo] Bebe has something to say to you.'"

Bebe comes on the line. "'The President wants you to know if this [Cambodian maneuver] doesn't work, Henry—it's your ass.'"

Nixon of grand manners. "Then [he] flew back to Washington on Marine One for an evening cruise on the presidential yacht, the *Sequoia*. Back at the White House by 8:30 that night, the President watched *Patton* again."

"It's 'Take Your Daughter to Work' Week."

Nixon the decision-maker. He is addressing the nation, giving his decision on Cambodia. "In this room, Woodrow Wilson made the great decisions which led to victory. Franklin Roosevelt made the decisions that led to our victory. Dwight D. Eisenhower made decisions that could end the war. John F. Kennedy, in his finest hour, made the great decision. It is customary to end a speech from the White House by asking support for the President. What I ask is far more important. I ask for your support for our brave men fighting tonight halfway around the world."

Nixon drawing exhilarated breath. "[Rose Mary] Woods, who had known Nixon for twenty years, thought she had never seen him so exhausted—or so exuberant. After a couple of drinks, the President said to [Marine aide John Brennan] in a deliberately gruff voice; 'Do you approve of what I said last night?'

"'It was one of the proudest moments of my life,' he answered."

Nixon acting out history. "When his yacht approached Mount Vernon, where naval vessels [passing by] always salute George Washington's tomb by playing the national anthem, the President ordered the captain: 'Really blast it out!' He stood at rigid attention there in the bow of the yacht, then he turned to the crew with a wide smile and shot his right thumb into the air.

"At five o'clock he helicoptered to Camp David and sat down to watch *Patton* again."

Presidential portraits, warts and all.

The Counterwar Redirected

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 6

WE are at Stage Two of what we call variously "Fighting Back," or "A Nation Challenged"; whatever. The enthusiasm generated in our allies two months ago has minced its way toward grudging approbation: and even that is shaded with contingencies. There are those among them who say okay, Uncle

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Sam, but be sure that you observe Ramadan. And we learn (perhaps correctly!) that bombing day after day appears to do less damage to the Taliban than to Western sensibilities. And indeed Mr. Rumsfeld has had to reassure Americans that there is a strategic design behind what he is doing, that all those spurts of black smoke that we see here and there in the mountainous landscape are actually designed to do intolerable damage to the enemy, not just give our navy and air force something to do outside of Vieques.

There are two modes in which to accost this problem of the dissipation of allied (and U.S.) resolve. One is what one might, for illustration, call the Hiroshima mode. Drop a couple of A-bombs on the buggers.

There are two reasons against this. The first is that we don't know where we would drop them, unless there is a particular mountain among some one thousand mountains in Afghanistan that especially vexes us. The second is that to break the taboo against the use of nuclear weapons is not absolutely to guarantee success against Osama bin Laden, but is absolutely to guarantee the alienation of the entire anti-nuclear culture, which includes 90 percent of every moralist under 70.

A second mode is to direct our efforts toward the conscription of Islamic sentiment. The reasoning is straightforward: We are aiming to extirpate people who cloak themselves in the guise of Islam-on-the-march. The heretics have lashed out at the United States, to be sure, and we are certainly willing and anxious to bankroll Islamic counteraction with arms and money. But the primary responsibility is theirs, even as the primary responsibility would be ours if a coterie branding itself an arm of Christian militancy and hiding out in the crevices of America or any of its possessions were to conspire to bomb or terrorize Muslim holy sites or holy men.

What if they don't go along?

This doesn't mean that we stop what we are doing in Afghanistan. But it does mean that the emphasis of American power is redirected in ways that impatient moralists can accept without cavil and that make our military activity in Afghanistan evolve in the direction of aid to an Islamic fraternity engaged in fighting a terrible disease within its own house. We are then acting in the capacity not only of avenging September 11, but as allies of Islam, concerned to cooperate in an hygienic religious enterprise.

Elusive Death

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 9

I HAVE a letter, and my guess is that you have one like it. Mine is from a middle-aged woman who brings me news of her father, an old friend retired in Arizona who slipped out of sight a few years ago. His daughter writes now to inform me of her own daughter's college plans and of her father's inability to help. "I never anticipated that dad would be in a nursing home, a virtual infant and not even know who I was much less [his granddaughter]. Alzheimer's Disease has to be one of the most horrible diseases there is today. I pray every day that he will die. And that is something that I have told very few people. My family is suffering terribly from what is happening with dad every day."

That doesn't sound quite right, does it—to pray that someone living should die? But though the sentiment is furtive, it has to be the wholesome sentiment of those who care deeply and experience intimately the plight of loved ones whose survival is only a technical biological finding. In rhetoric, the denial of the opposite (a litotes) is the gentler way of saying it, as in, "I am hardly praying that Ronald Reagan should live another eight years . . ." Directly said, that would translate into: I hope he will cease to suffer, and cause others to suffer.

Now that is not quite the question posed by the Oregon imbroglio. There you had a plebiscite pass, called an assisted-suicide law. It is very specific legislation. It authorizes a physician to prescribe a terminal medicine (morphine, the layman assumes) to a patient in pain, who, in the judgment of that physician and one more doctor, will not live another six months, and, being mentally competent, communicates to his doctor the desire to expedite death. An interesting nod to tradition: The physician may prescribe the death potion, but not administer it.

In the four years since the plebiscite was activated, 70 residents of Oregon have taken advantage of its provisions. Now John Ashcroft, as attorney general, comes on the scene with an injunction forbidding the practice. More exactly, he advises doctors in Oregon that in prescribing the fatal substances, they are deploying something that is regulated under federal law. And federal law views such substances as designed as therapeutic, not mortal provender. The attorney general threatened to withdraw the license to prescribe drugs from any doctor who used his authority to prescribe them, intending that they be used to facilitate assisted suicide.

Oregon's own attorney general howled, his position being that which laws govern the administration of medicine in the state of Oregon are the business of the people of the state of Oregon. Enter, on Thursday, a federal judge in the District Court who stayed the order of the attorney general of the United States. The order gives the higher court a November 20 deadline if it elects to overrule and reimpose the federal ban. Judge Robert Jones said that, pending a broader judicial hearing, "there is no showing that the U.S. would be irreparably impaired by a temporary stay of the attorney general's action." That has to mean that if the 71st petitioner for the terminal prescription of morphine is given it, and dies before November 20, the Ashcroft cause is not irreparably damaged; though to be sure, the patient will be dead.

Now as with the fight over the marijuana laws in California, there is in Oregon a constitutional contention: Who should decide such matters? Washington or Salem? But again, as with the marijuana laws, there is a third presence, which asserts, or tries to do so, a transcendent point. In California, it was: Nobody should go to jail for smoking pot. In Oregon it is: Nobody should intervene between a patient and his doctor. "Helping nature take its course is not criminal and it should be outside governmental regulation," writes Jerome Groopman, professor of medicine at Harvard.

Now the Oregon imbroglio, constitutional and ethical, is a distance removed from the plight of my friend in Arizona, who is dying, but not fast enough to appease undeniable demands of mercy. That is the major ethical question to be faced in a world whose scientists struggle so successfully to prolong life, and whose moralists are retrograde in formulating correlative codes that confront the raw message of the time: In 1960, the percentage of those in America alive at 75 or over was 3.1. In the year 2000, the percentage was 6. That is, in general, wonderful news for a great many people. But for a few, it is bad news. And these present us with the problem.

—UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

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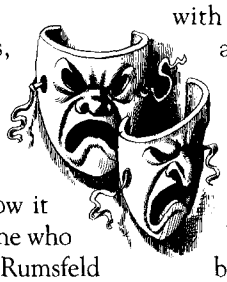
■ THE MISANTHROPE'S CORNER ■

FLORENCE KING

RANDOM thoughts on what may yet go down in history as the War Without a Name . . .

Can you remember, off the top of your head, the last thing they came up with? I can't. If the Bushies put it through the sensitivity grinder one more time they'll have to call it the Inoffensive Offensive. They're like a teenage girl experimenting with her name; address the newly minted "Luci" as "Lucy" and she becomes hysterical.



Speaking of word endings, the real epidemic is not anthrax but dropped gs. Both Bushes long ago made a point of adopting this speech habit to pass as just-plain-folks, but now it has spread to just about everyone who speaks publicly, from Donald Rumsfeld to Diane Dimond. Their aim is to project jaunty confidence, but the overall effect is that of globetrotting country boys and sleekly coiffed hicks. Dropped gs have been weaponized, aerosoled, enspored. Delivered to us in the electronic envelope of television, they waft out and float around us like crumbly mist, fulfilling the ancient prophecy that the English language will end, not with a bang, but with a whoosh.

Also contributing to its death throes is the constant reiteration that we are not making war on a race, religion, nation, or region, but on terrorism. This means we don't dare call the enemy Arabs, Muslims, Afghanis, or Middle Easterners lest we destroy some imaginary coalition, so Bush calls them "the evil ones." Black-and-white thinking is refreshing to a point, but he's beginning to sound like the host of a classic-movie channel introducing Vincent Price Week.

The most curious thing to emerge from the crisis were the descriptions of the 54-year-old Bush as our "young president" that suddenly cropped up in the print media, in columns by Ben Bradlee and Maureen Dowd, to name just two. Combined with regular assurances that Cheney had been whisked off to an undisclosed secret location, it sounded like a coup in the works. Now, though, the infantilization has stopped and the danger is past, thwarted by Bush himself. Whether he realizes it or not, he burnished his own image when he gave Tom Ridge the Javert-like title of Homeland Security Director. The one man in America whose eyes are even more pleading than Bush's own, Ridge looks as lost as a Dickensian orphan, with no trace of the saving pluckiness that goes with the type. His air of helpless abandonment, combined with his incredibly tiny mouth, are a guarantee that Bush will never be called young again.

The War Without a Name is proving that patriotism is the last refuge of the tone-deaf. Just because "God Bless America" is easier to sing than "The Star-Spangled Banner" is no excuse for singing it if you can't carry a tune in a bucket. Emboldened by GBA's un-operatic range, alleged singers with no memory of Kate Smith are murdering it with ululating shrieks and gulpy crooning, or belting it out like the last of the red-hot mamas in the manner of Jessica Simpson, the Las Vegas lounge singer and teenage pop star who performed it at the White House, with something close to bumps and grinds, for a clearly dismayed president.

For once, I liked him. The look on his face was a perfect match for his soulmate, George V, who liked a tune he could whistle, a story with a plot, and a painting that looked like what was written on the little brass plate. Once, when the Grenadier Guards band played a selection from a Richard Strauss symphonic fantasia, he sent them a note: "His Majesty does not know what the band just played, but it is never to be played again."

I get the distinct feeling that the most important news is consigned to the crawl ribbon at the bottom of the TV screen. While the anchors go on about stress, Afghani pen pals, and buying gas masks, the crawl reports the meaty stuff. In late September it told of Westerners attacked in Saudi Arabia, two Christian churches in Kenya burned to the ground and "We Condemn America" traced in the ashes, an anti-U.S. protest in Athens by 2,000 demonstrators, threats to our ambassador in Indonesia, and the evacuation of the L.A. subway when riders smelled something and their eyes began to water. This last received brief coverage but the rest, including the rumble in the cradle of Western Civ, were never mentioned. Nor was this crawl item from late October: "Sri Lankan terrorists claim responsibility for attack on fuel ship. Seven killed." Where? Whose ship?

I think a lot is happening that they choose to ignore, but to avoid the appearance of censorship they drag it along the bottom of the screen on the assumption that most viewers won't read it. The minority who do read it come in for a more subtle censorship: Because it's impossible to read and listen at the same time, they take in half of the crawl and half of the sound without digesting either one. A handful of beetle-browed eccentrics can be expected to mute the sound and concentrate on the crawl, but there aren't enough of us to matter.

Good news: The War Without a Name is bringing back traditional sexual differences with a vengeance. If sanity is restored, we can thank maps. Men and their maps, men and their pointers, men and their colored tacks and signal flags. The big brass are all over the tube, droning away in the monotone men slip into when they heed the call to fulfill masculinity's solemn duty to be boring. It's like that unbearable stock scene in WWII movies: "Our chaps are here, the Yanks are here, and Jerry is here," says John Loder, slapping the map smartly with his swagger stick. Then comes the synchronizing-of-watches scene, when millions of women refrain from asking how they get the second hand in the same place on every watch for fear that some man will start *explaining*.

Nothing convinces a woman that she is not a man like having her capacity for boredom tested and finding that she comes up short. The war on terrorism has expanded into a war on gender feminism, and an ideal leader has emerged: Rear Adm. John Stufflebeem, who is so boring that he sounds as if somebody had started to embalm him and then stopped. **NR**

Miss King can be reached at P.O. Box 7113, Fredericksburg, Va. 22404.

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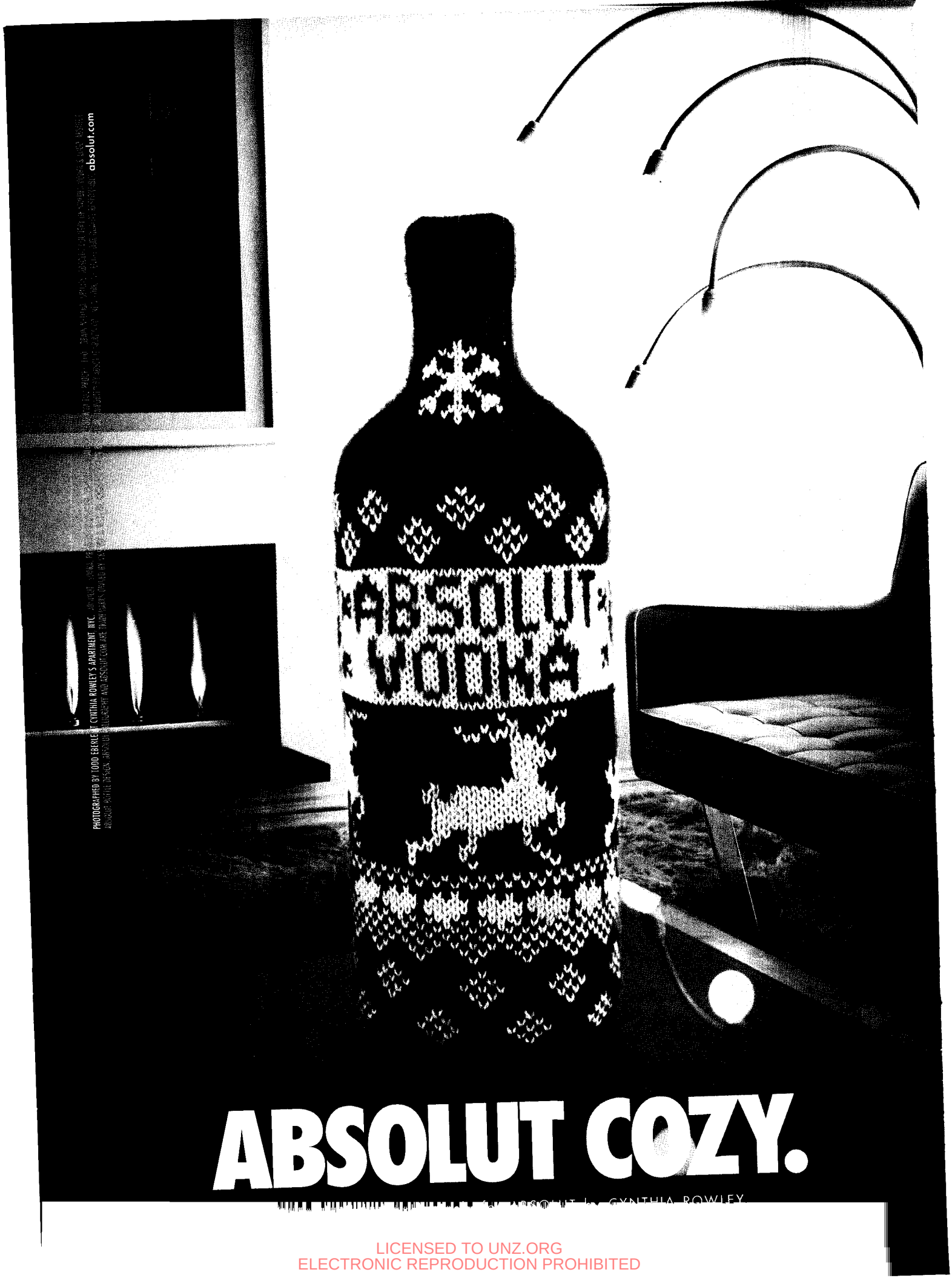

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